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SHORT SERMONS
FOR THE
SUNDAYS OF THE YEAR

BY

REV. J. R. NEWELL, O. P., P. G.

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FOREWORD

THE reception that met these sermons on their serial publication in the HOMILETIC MONTHLY AND PASTORAL REVIEW has been flattering enough, in the opinion of the Editors, to warrant their republication in book form.

They are offered in the hope that they may be found suggestive helps in the preparation of short sermons, and capable of being developed into more pretentious discourses. They have purposely been put in a compact form, which will lend itself readily to development.

There is to-day a widespread tendency to make religion merely a matter of feeling and of conduct, and to ignore entirely the dogmatic truths upon which religion is founded. It is to counteract this dangerous tendency that the Church more and more insists on dogmatic preaching, and it is to conform to the mind and wishes of the Church, and to the teachings of the Council of Trent, that subjects almost exclusively dogmatic were chosen for these sermons.

It is hoped that this volume of Sunday Sermons may assist in affording to the Faithful solid religious instruction and spiritual inspiration.

THE AUTHOR

FEAST OF ST. DOMINIC, 1919

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CONTENTS

PAGE

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST 1

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. (Fifth after Epiphany) ON HELL 5

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. (Sixth after Epiphany) HUMILITY, A CHARACTERISTIC OF THE TRUE CHURCH 9

LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM . 13

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT. THE GENERAL JUDGMENT 17

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT. JESUS AND THE PROPHECIES 20

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT. THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST . 24

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT. THE INCARNATION 27

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS. THE PRESENTATION OF THE CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE 31

FIRST SUNDAY IN JANUARY (Epiphany). FAITH 35

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY. THE DUTY OF PARENTS TOWARD THEIR CHILDREN 38

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY. MARRIAGE 41

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY. OUR SALVATION 45

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY. MORTAL SIN 49

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY. THE PASSION OF CHRIST 52

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT. THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST AND OURS . . 55

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT. THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST 59

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT. THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY 62

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT. HOLY COMMUNION 65

PASSION SUNDAY. THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS LIFE 69

PALM SUNDAY. CONFESSION OF SINS 73

EASTER SUNDAY. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST 77

LOW SUNDAY. THE OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH DAY 81

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER. JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD 84

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER. HEAVEN 87

CONTENTS

PAGE

Fourth Sunday After Easter. The Holy Ghost 91
Fifth Sunday After Easter. Prayer 95
Sixth Sunday After Easter. Confidence in God 98
Pentecost Sunday. The Holy Ghost in the Catholic Church . . 101
Trinity Sunday. The Blessed Trinity 103
Second Sunday After Pentecost. The Holy Eucharist 107
Third Sunday After Pentecost. The Mercy of God 110
Fourth Sunday After Pentecost. The Church and Education . 112
Fifth Sunday After Pentecost. The Sin of Anger 115
Sixth Sunday After Pentecost. The Lord's Prayer 118
Seventh Sunday After Pentecost. Protestantism a False Prophet 122
Eighth Sunday After Pentecost. Our Duty Toward the Poor . 124
Ninth Sunday After Pentecost. On Hearing Holy Mass 127
Tenth Sunday After Pentecost. The Qualities of Prayer . . . 130
Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost. The Sacramental System in the Church 133
Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost. On the Love of Our Neighbor 136
Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost. Gratitude Toward God . 139
Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost. Avarice 142
Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost. Sanctifying Grace 145
Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost. Humility 148
Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost. The Love of God 150
Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost. Contrition 153
Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost. Dispositions for Receiving Holy Communion 156
Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost. Faith in Jesus 159
Twenty-first Sunday After Pentecost. The Forgiveness of Injuries 162
Twenty-second Sunday After Pentecost. Religious and Civil Allegiance 165

SHORT SERMONS FOR THE SUNDAYS OF THE YEAR

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST

"Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live."—Matt., ix, 18.

The high and merciful designs of God upon us are fulfilled in Jesus, the Incarnate Word, who came among us to bring us back from our wanderings in the shadow of death into the path of Divine truth and life, and to lead us, redeemed and regenerated, to the joys of the house of God, our Father.

Jesus was announced beforehand by a long line of prophets, who declared His twofold nature, Divine and human, and described His miraculous works of mercy. "God Himself," said Isaias, "will come to save His people, and they shall see the glory of the Lord and the beauty of our God. The bruised reed He will not break, and the smoking flax He will not extinguish. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf be unstopped, and the lame shall leap as the hart and the tongue of the dumb shall be free" (Isaias, xxxv, 4-5). "For the Spirit of the Lord is upon His Holy One, and hath annointed and sent Him to preach to the meek and to heal the contrite of heart, to comfort them that mourn, and to proclaim the acceptable year from the Lord" (Isaias, lxi, 1-2).

Jesus fulfilled these predictions, and miracles of mercy and goodness flowed from Him as abundantly as the rays of light stream from the sun. He healed with a word the paralytic, the leprous, the possessed, the blind and the dumb. With five loaves

of bread He fed five thousand people in the wilderness, and, again, four thousand with seven loaves. He calmed the tempest. He walked upon the waves, and He raised the dead to life. And while He was intent on one miraculous cure, others flowed from Him, as if spontaneously, in response to the faith of the infirm who touched but the hem of his garment.

These sublime works were sufficient to convince every sincere mind that Jesus was what He declared Himself to be—the Messias, the Incarnate Son of God, the Master and ruler of the world. Hence His challenge to the Jews: "If you believed Moses and the prophets, you would believe me; for they wrote of me and foretold these things. . . . And the works that I do in the name of my Father, they give testimony of me." But "The light was come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil." And how obstinate was the pride and how satanic the malice of the Jewish leaders, which could so harden their hearts against the Saviour that His most stupendous miracles should, instead of converting, only confound them, and set them to conspire His death!

The miracles of our Lord, besides being proofs of His Divinity and beneficent exertions of Divine power in behalf of the afflicted, were lessons of eternal wisdom, symbols of Divine gifts to men, and pledges of everlasting blessings. For by them He would teach us that He is the bread of eternal life to every human soul; that He is the physician of our moral infirmities, and the sure hope and final happiness of every repentant sinner.

One of our Lord's most important and conclusive miracles was the restoration to life of the Ruler's daughter. The maiden was only twelve years of age, and had just died. The father, with extraordinary faith, besought our Lord to raise her to life. Jesus, who refused nothing to those who asked, went to the house, and, having ordered the hired mourners to be ejected,

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entered with a few witnesses and took the child by the hand and bade her arise to life and health. It was a wonderful favor granted to the child and to her parents; and how they must afterwards have loved the kind and mighty Master. But it was a temporal favor, and pointed a higher meaning—a spiritual and an eternal blessing. For it represented the merciful and speedy restoration to the Divine life of grace in those who, having fallen into mortal sin, hasten immediately to Jesus, and, through repentance and confession, are revived by Him before the habit of sin has been established in them—before they have become cold and rigid in spiritual death. For one of the dread effects of mortal sin is the inclination to remain in it and, by repeated surrenders to the temptation, to become the hardened and helpless slave of a sinful habit. Against this deadly torpor we must have instant recourse to Jesus in His Sacraments, where He continually exerts His merciful power and restores the repentant at once to spiritual life and vigor. No evil that could happen to us is equal to that of mortal sin. While it is a grievous offense against God, and is, in that sense, an infinite evil, yet the sinner inflicts upon his own soul unspeakable harm in putting himself in a state of deadly enmity towards his Almighty Creator; in incurring the eternal loss of Heaven and becoming amenable to the judgment of hell; in delivering his soul to spiritual death and moral deformity, and, by obstinacy in sin, making it the settled and foul abode of Satan, who seizes upon its perverted faculties to retain it captive and to insure its final damnation. It is this that moves our Divine Lord to pity and to the patient employment of all the merits of His redeeming death on the Cross in pursuit of the sinner through every vicissitude until, at last, the sinner, weary of his wayward course, turns in his desolation, but with faith and confidence, to the Saviour, and repentance is awakened in his heart and by the Divine might of Christ's

Sacrament of Mercy his restoration to the life of grace and to God's friendship is instantaneous and complete. Such miracles of mercy are abundant and continuous in the Church.

No mercy, therefore, can equal that of the pardon of our sins, and Jesus proves Himself our true and eternal Friend. And as His goodness to the greatest sinners when on earth inspired them to love Him much and made them saints, so it should do for us who have so often experienced His mercy. To love Him is the secret of spiritual life and moral strength. Ask Him for the gift of His love. It is the gift of life. In loving Him all sin is consumed, and we clasp to our souls Him who is the infinite source of life and happiness Divine and eternal.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
(FIFTH AFTER EPIPHANY)

ON HELL

"Suffer both to grow until the harvest. And at the time of the harvest I will say to the reaper: Gather up first the cockle in bundles to burn; but the wheat gather ye into my barn."—Matt., xiii, 31.

Good, being positive, integral entity or perfection, has God for its author.

Evil, being the absence of requisite entity or perfection, is a defect which has the creature for its author. For the creature is deficient in its nature and its actions.

Evil is twofold—moral and physical. Moral evil is the defection of the free, intelligent or rational creature from right reason or the order of our relation to God, and this is sin.

Physical evil is the consequence of sin, and is permitted, or even directly inflicted by God in punishment of sin, and, in this life, as a remedy conducive, through the merits of Christ, to our moral amelioration and perfection, if we contritely and patiently endure it.

"God created man right and incorruptible, and left him in the hands of his own counsel," that is, his free will. "What, therefore, he chooses he shall have—good or evil, life or death." In Christ's Kingdom on earth—the Church—there will be found good members and bad. For it is not the Church only of the elect, as early heretics held; nor did the Church of Christ, therefore, as such, ever become corrupt, as Protestantism asserts.

By a necessary impulse of our rational nature all men seek the supreme good in general as their last end. But, in particular, our choice of any thing as our supreme good and last end is our own deliberate and free act. Our choice may be God—as it

should be; for He is the only supreme good and last end or beatitude of the rational creature; or it may be some apparent good which we know to be essentially opposed to God. Those who choose God as their supreme good and last end are just and good. Those who choose apparent good as their last end in opposition to God are bad, evil and wicked. Good and evil are intermingled in the world and in the Church. Jesus likened His Church to a field in which He sowed good grain; but in which the enemy—the devil and worldlings—have sown the seeds of a pernicious weed—error and vice, which are allowed by the wisdom and patience of the Master to grow up together until the harvest. For to take away all evil out of the world and the Church before "the time of the nations be fulfilled" would be to prevent greater good.

Moral evil, therefore, is allowed by God because He will not force our free will; because the wicked may yet be converted; because from wicked fathers often come great saints, and because God would prove and perfect the faithful by the trials and persecutions they must suffer from the wicked.

In the meantime Christ has revealed to us the separate eternal destinies of good and evil when the time for uprooting comes, at the Judgment Day; and, as Christians, we profess the eternal truth formulated in the Apostles' Creed, and we say, "I believe in life everlasting," that is, that the good shall live forever happy with God in Heaven, and the wicked shall be punished forever in the flames of hell. To speak at present of the latter alternative: while God is infinite love and goodness, as all creation and the history of human salvation attest, He is a lawgiver—holy and just. His law is impressed on the human conscience, and is formulated in the Ten Commandments, which are the most wise and beneficent declarations of our moral duties in the threefold relation in which we stand towards God, ourselves and our fel-

lowmen; and upon the fulfilment of this law God has pledged our future eternal happiness.

To enable us to observe His law God grants to all abundant light, inspiration and grace. But the law must be observed or be vindicated.

Concerning the future state of man, the Catholic Church, taught by the declarations of Christ and guided by the Holy Ghost, teaches that if death finds the soul in the state of God's sanctifying grace, yet with venial sins unrepented of, or with a debt of satisfaction unpaid for remitted mortal sins, or with other minor faults, the judgment of God will sentence that soul to a temporary punishment in the flames of Purgatory. If death finds the soul perfect in Divine grace and love, God will take that soul immediately to Himself—to His eternal Beatific Vision —which is Heaven. If the soul departs this life of probation in mortal sin—in impenitence for its mortal sin, the just judgment of God will sentence that soul to eternal punishment—to hell.

Owing to a primitive revelation from God the human race has constantly asserted its belief in a future eternal punishment, and not all the passions of man nor the sophistries of sensualists have been able to shake this universal belief.

The prophets constantly menaced the Hebrew sinners with this formidable doctrine, and warned them of "the realm of darkness and misery, where the shadow of death and eternal horror reign; where the wicked shall be wrapped in inextinguishable fire, and where the smoke of their torments shall ascend forever."

Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, taught that the earthly history of man will end in an eternal separation of the just from the wicked. This is the meaning of His parable of the good grain and the cockle, as He Himself explained it. Again: In the parable of Dives and Lazarus He declared that in the future state there intervenes between the good and the bad an abyss which

no man can ever pass over. He has urged us to make any sacrifice however painful that may be necessary to save ourselves from eternal damnation: "If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is better for thee, having only one eye, to enter into life, than with both eyes, to go into hell-fire —which shall never be extinguished." He has left us, already formulated, the sentence that will separate the just from the wicked forever: "In that day the Son of Man will say to those on His right hand: Come ye blessed of my Father, and possess the Kingdom prepared for you. . . . And then He will say to those on His left: Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire. . . . And the just shall go into life eternal, but the wicked into everlasting punishment." This doctrine of the Saviour, believed among the Jews and preached by the Apostles, was accepted and applauded by the Gentile world, as Celsus, the pagan philosopher and early antagonist of Christianity, bore witness, when he wrote: "You Christians are right at least in this, that they who live justly will be eternally recompensed in a future life, while the incorrigibly wicked will be condemned to everlasting punishment. This you rightly hold in common with the whole world."

In the light of this eternal truth let us maintain in our souls a due fear of God's avenging justice. For the holy fear of God is the necessary beginning of that Divine wisdom on which all moral life must stand. Let us fear to offend the Divine Majesty and goodness; let us fear to incur the Divine displeasure and forfeit forever the love, the vision and the possession of our God.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
(SIXTH AFTER EPIPHANY)

HUMILITY, A CHARACTERISTIC OF THE TRUE CHURCH

"The Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a grain of mustard seed, which is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown it becometh a great tree."—Matt., xiii, 31-36.

Humility is the moral foundation of the Christian Religion and a distinguishing mark of the true Church. The fallen race of man could never get back to the truth and grace of God without humble self-abasement before the Divine Majesty outraged by sin. Even the all-holy Redeemer of Mankind must, in the counsels of God, humble Himself for the Divine honor and human salvation. Hence, as St. Paul says, "Though He was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be the equal of God, yet, for our sakes, He humbled Himself, taking the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."

Humility is a virtue inspired by the knowledge and admission of our dependence on God in all things. By it we confess our own limitations in regard, especially, to Divine things—such as the truth and grace of God; and we accept these gifts gratefully and obediently through the channels and on the conditions established for mankind by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Pride is a vice inspired by an inordinate conception of self-excellence; and it finds its highest expression in the presumption by which men attempt to usurp the Divine things of God—His truth and grace—through self-will, independence and self-guidance.

By pride fell Lucifer, with all his rebel followers, from the height of Heaven to the depths of hell. By pride our first parents fell, and involved the human race in the guilt and all the conse-

quences of original sin. By pride were destroyed great kings and empires. By pride the leaders of the once Chosen People were led on to reject and to crucify the Saviour of the world. By pride Christian bishops, priests and princes have contrived and abetted heresies, and have shaken the Church of God with diabolical violence; and, while powerless to destroy her, have wrested whole nations from the truth and fold of Christ.

By reason of His Incarnation Jesus, the God-man, was, in His Sacred Humanity, the humblest of mankind. His human soul saw God's face, and therefore habitually annihilated itself before the Infinite Majesty and Holiness. His soul beheld also the opposite of God—human sin, the sins of the world, and therefore willingly submitted to every humiliation for its atonement. This moral character Jesus impressed upon His institution—the Church. Humility, therefore, may be regarded as a moral note of the true Church of Christ.

Christ designed that His Church, no matter how great in the number of her members and the prestige of her spiritual gifts, should ever stand and prosper by humility; and He said: "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and have appointed you that you go and bear fruit, and that your fruit remain. . . . Without me you can do nothing." Jesus was to regenerate the world by the gifts of Divine truth and grace committed to the teaching and ministration of His Church; and hence, mankind must be able to recognize His Divinity in His work, and to learn by whose almighty power and infallible authority those twelve poor fishermen attempted, and so rapidly accomplished, the transformation of the pagan world into the Christian. And therefore He formed His Church of elements humanly speaking the most incapable for this mission; but because they humbly relied on Him—adhered to His word and trusted to His promised guidance, they were elevated to the height of wisdom and of elo-

quence, and endowed with miraculous power and Divine inspiration, so that the pagan world, both learned and unlearned, both rich and poor, thronged to the faith and accepted doctrines transcending the human mind and a moral code restraining human passions and enjoining contempt for worldly possessions; and thus was accomplished a spiritual conquest surpassing everything in the history of human salvation. It was the grain of mustard sown by the hand of the Godman, and, through humble obedience, grown into a mighty tree which fills the earth and the ages, and gives Divine shade and protection to the nations that would be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

Consider, on the other hand, the historic enemy of the Church and test its claims by the Divine touch-stone of humility. While there are individual Protestants who are humble, and individual Catholics who are proud, both are so in spite of the religious system of which they are members. For, as a system, Catholicity is marked by humility, and Protestantism is marked by pride. The authors of Protestantism were guilty of pride in revolting from the Divine authority set up by Christ in His imperishable Church; and their pride was further consummated by their presuming, on their own right, to found a religion in opposition to the universal Church and to call it Christianity. In its very origin, therefore, Protestantism was without the gift of faith; for its proud claim of the right of private judgment in matters of Christian belief is the deathblow to Christian faith. Christianity is a supernatural religion proposed for our acceptance on the word of the Son of God committed to His infallible Church; and therefore its mysterious truths cannot be accepted by the human mind without the submission of our intelligence to the word of Christ as it comes to us through the teaching of His accredited witness—the Church. But this acceptance—this submission—cannot be made without humility; for God resisteth the

proud, and giveth His grace to the humble." Hence the doctrinal disruption and religious disunion characterizing Protestantism, and hence, on the contrary, the doctrinal integrity and religious unity distinguishing the Catholic Church. To rebel, therefore, against the doctrinal authority of the Church is to lose the word of Christ; and of such rebels He warned the Church in His last discourse: "All that I have received from my Father I have made known to you. . . . Therefore, if they have kept my word, they will keep yours also."

Let Catholics despise the proud and ignorant sneers of the infidel and the heretic, and, with the humble Godman and His humble faithful Church, openly and bravely profess their faith as God's children, whose end and reward are the Divine joy and glory of eternity.

LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

"When you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel, the prophet, standing in the holy place, let him that readeth understand."—Matt., xxiv, 15.

In this day's Gospel our Lord foretells the judgment that is to light upon Jerusalem, and, after the manner of the prophets, couples His prediction with a prophecy of the judgment awaiting the whole world, of which the destruction of Jerusalem was to be the type and the proof.

God had chosen the Hebrew race in the person of Abraham and his descendants in order to form of them a theocratic nation, or special people of God; and their true King was the Messias and Redeemer promised to the world from the beginning. He was the Eternal Son of God, who was to become man and be born of a virgin of the tribe of Juda and the house of David. God sent them Moses, endowed with superior wisdom and miraculous power, to deliver them from Egyptian captivity; to promulgate the Divine law, and lead them to the promised land. He sent them great prophets in every age to uphold their faith and hope in the promised Messias by continually predicting His coming and describing His character and works. God had been good to the Hebrew nation and exceedingly patient with them. But they were always a hard people to rule—inveterately materialistic, avaricious, prone to idolatry, and extremely obstinate. They slew the prophets one after another for charging them with their sins and menacing them with the judgments of God. In the fulness of the predicted time the Messias came in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem, as the prophets foretold. The great John the Baptist pointed Him

out to the nation as the Son of God and the Lamb predestined to take away the sins of the world; and Jesus fulfilled all predictions by His most Divine life and His miraculous works. But the Jews were obstinate in their unbelief; and, in Jerusalem, the leaders of the people plotted and decreed His death. They had perverted the meaning of the prophesies, and ascribed to the expected Messias only a political mission as the restorer of Hebrew national independence and material splendor. They wanted no moral or spiritual deliverer; and they rejected the Christ of God and the whole Divine plan of Redemption.

And now, at the close of His mission, Jesus, from the heights of Mt. Olivet, pronounces the doom of Jerusalem and the apostate Hebrew race. Looking down upon the city, with its gigantic walls and lofty towers, its glittering palaces and its wonderful Temple, He said: "Amen, I say to you, there shall not remain a stone upon a stone of this city and Temple that shall not be thrown down; and this generation shall not pass until my word be fulfilled. When, therefore, you (my Disciples) shall see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, let all who are in Judea flee to the mountains. For Jerusalem shall be suddenly encompassed with an army, and the days of vengeance shall be fulfilled upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles till the times of the nations be fulfilled."

A week after this prediction the Jews filled up the measure of their iniquity by crucifying the Son of God.

Thirty-six years later the prophecy of Jesus was accomplished upon them amid scenes of unparalleled horror. While Jerusalem was thronged, during the Paschal solemnities, the genius of Titus threw a vast army suddenly around the city, and entrapped within its walls eleven hundred thousand Jews. The siege lasted six

months, and during that time seven hundred thousand men, women and children perished by starvation, civil strife and suicide, besides the endless slaughter carried on by the Romans as wall after wall was captured. At last the city was taken by a general assault of all the legions; the Temple was wrapped in flames; the inhabitants were put to the sword during a massacre of three days; Titus reserved three thousand young Jews for the gladiatorial shows of the Roman circus; Jerusalem was ploughed over and sown with salt, and the remnant of the Hebrew race were banished from Judea and sold as slaves among the nations.

The lesson we should learn from this event is: to maintain in our souls a just fear of the Almighty, and to recognize, in this our day, the time of the Divine Visitation and the things that are for our peace, that we may make our peace with God. For, as unto Jerusalem, so unto every impenitent sinner, and unto this impenitent age, the judgment of God, sudden and terrible, is fast approaching. Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God and the crucified Redeemer of the world, is the sole Master of human society and the arbiter of its destinies. The nations are His inheritance, and He will rule them. Over the children of obedience He will rule by the light of His truth and the sweetness of His grace through the Church; and over the sons of pride and revolt He will rule by a rod of iron. Since the downfall of Jerusalem and the subsequent dissolution of the Hebrew nation Jesus achieved universal spiritual sovereignty over an enlightened Christian world, whose happy progress was marked by centuries of faith and charity, of contentment, dignity and peace.

But in these latter days has been inaugurated an era of revolt from the reign of Christ, and modern society has thrust Him out of its life and thought, and placed in His stead its idols of Mammon and pride—while maintaining a conspiracy of malignant lying against His Church, and a fraudulent boasting of its

own superior light and progress over the ages of Christian faith and obedience. But the judgment of God upon this age is not far off. For while general poverty and destitution are the chief distinction of modern infidel society, the religious desolation, the unbridled licentiousness, the enormous crimes and injustices, the international contentions, the social divisions, hatreds and revolt which agitate and disgrace the modern world mark it as the ripened object of universal Divine chastisement.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT

"And then they shall see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with great power and majesty."—Luke, xxi, 27.

Besides the particular Judgment awaiting each soul of man as it leaves the body in death (a Judgment, the result of which is unseen of men), there is to come a day of public, general Judgment for the assembled human race—a Judgment accompanied with all the visible circumstances of grandeur and terror.

The final Judge of the world is Christ, the Incarnate Son of God and our Redeemer. "For He it is whom the Father hath appointed to judge the living and the dead."

The following reasoning will show us the justice and necessity of the last and general Judgment. It is just and necessary to vindicate before the assembled world the honor of the Incarnate Son of God. God sent His only begotten Son into the world to enlighten, redeem and save us; and though mighty in His wisdom and His works, yet the poverty and humility of Christ were made the occasion of despising Him on the part of the proud and avaricious; and while a few disciples timidly followed Him, He was universally scorned and finally crucified by His apostate people. His death was, indeed, the redemption of the world and the inauguration of His perpetual reign of truth and grace in His imperishable Church; yet, throughout the subsequent ages of Christianity, while, for the most part, only the poor and simple have submitted to His rule, the proud, the opulent and cultured of the world have treated Him and His Church with indifference, contradiction and scorn. It is just and necessary, therefore, that the human race should be summoned to hear the final judgment on its conduct from the lips of the Arbiter of its destinies, and to

witness the vindication of the honor of Christ on that last accounting day, when the proud and impenitent shall lie trembling before the judicial power and majesty of the God-man. Again, the whole man as an individual and all men as members of the human social community should receive their just and final judgment. In our earthly career of moral probation both body and soul in the individual and all the members of the social body concur in the moral life and conduct which Heaven has declared worthy of praise or of blame; yet our death prevents the full measure of justice from being awarded us. Hence the day of universal resurrection, "when the dead who lie in the dust of the grave shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall rise unto the Judgment; the just unto immortal honor, and the wicked unto everlasting shame," the just unto the perfection of the glorified Body of Christ; the wicked in corporal hideousness as the counterpart and reflexion of the moral deformity in guilty souls doomed to eternal damnation.

Finally, there should be a day of general unmasking, when the hypocrites who impose upon mankind, to the dishonor of God and the perversion of souls, shall be seen by the whole world as they are seen of God—men who, under the pretense of superior knowledge and the plea of science, are leading entire generations of mankind away from Christ; and heretical, self-commissioned ministers of religion, so-called, who falsify the word of God; who reject discipline and despise obedience; who hate the Church of God, and create sects; who by their travesties of Christ's doctrine and religion mislead souls and cause the name of the Lord to be blasphemed among the nations. Against the infidel, in that day, shall be seen all the forces of nature gathered in the hands of the God-man to execute appointed judgment on the enemies of God and the deceivers of mankind. While of those heretical ministers who cry "Lord, Lord," there shall be many found, that

day, further removed from Him by far than those to whom His name was never known.

After the manner of the prophets, who rested the proof of their more important prophesies on some minor prediction whose event would be witnessed by their generation, Christ, to convince the incredulous among the Jews, and of all times, rested his prediction of the world's final destruction and judgment on His prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, which was witnessed by the generation that heard Him. The argument, therefore, is conclusive and unanswerable:—as Jerusalem, so the world—Jerusalem was suddenly destroyed by the vengeance of God—such, therefore, is the infallible doom of the world.

Our Lord Himself drew the practical lesson which concerns each of us individually in view of the judgment day, and He said: "Take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is. Even as a man who, going into a far country, left his house and gave authority to his servants over every work, commanding them to watch. Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the lord of the house cometh; lest coming on a sudden he find you sleeping. And what I say to you" (my disciples) "I say to all—watch."

While the sudden destruction of the whole world and the general resurrection and final judgment of mankind will present a scene of unspeakable grandeur and of eternal import, what should chiefly engage our immediate and personal interest is the particular Judgment that is to follow upon our death. For the general Judgment day will find every man in the immutable state of salvation or of damnation to which the particular Judgment shall have sentenced his soul. Let us, therefore, put our souls in the grace and favor of our Judge, and abide continually in His friendship. Entering to-day on the season of Advent for the worthy celebration of the Saviour's birth in Bethlehem, let us

make that divine event to be of actual value to ourselves personally by our sacramental union with Him; and thus established firmly in His love, we shall be "able in that day to stand without fear before His judgment seat," and shall hear His blessed summons to eternal joy at His right hand.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

JESUS AND THE PROPHECIES

"Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. . . . And blessed is he who shall not be scandalized in me."—Matt., xi, 4-6.

When God is about to accomplish openly some great work in behalf of mankind, He announces it long and frequently beforehand in order to accustom men's hearing of it and to prepare them for its reception when it shall come to pass. Now the greatest and holiest event accomplished by the Almighty in all time was the Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God for our redemption, or the Advent of the Messias.

Hence God sanctified and inspired the patriarchs of old and the long line of Hebrew prophets with the vision of the promised Saviour and the fore-knowledge of His redeeming life and works among the Chosen People; and they declared His twofold nature, Divine and human, and indicated every circumstance relative to His advent—the precise time and place of His appearance; the particular tribe and royal family from which He was to derive His human descent; His virginal conception and birth; His consummate wisdom and goodness, and His miraculous power. At the origin of Hebrew history, the great Patriarch Jacob, from his dying couch, uttered this remarkable prediction:

"The sceptre of the sovereign power shall not fail in the tribe of Juda until He comes who is to be sent—the expectation of all nations" (Genesis, xlix, 10). This sovereignty of the tribe of Juda began with King David, and endured through the greatest hazards for nigh two thousand years, or until Jesus of Nazareth appeared, when the High Sanhedrim of the Jews, in rejecting Him before the Court of Pilate, authoritatively announced its fall and extinction, and declared, "We have no King but Caesar."

Whenever in its past history the sovereignty of the house of David was imperiled a prophet of God was at hand to reaffirm and, even by miracle, prove to the nation its divinely predestined perpetuity until the coming of the Messias. Thus, in the days of Achaz, King of Juda, when two powerful kings combined in a long war against him, and consternation filled all Judea, the Prophet Isaias came forth and allayed all fear by a new and wonderful prediction binding afresh the destinies of the throne of David with the advent of the Messia, and he said: "Hear ye O tribe of Juda and house of David! The Lord Himself will give you a sign" (a miracle). "For behold a Virgin shall conceive and shall bring forth a Son, and he shall be called Emmanuel—God the Almighty among us" (Isaias, vii, 13-14). And of this predicted virginal conception and birth of the Messias the prophet was able to convince the nation and assure its faith and hope by a corroborative prophecy, at once fulfilled, of the speedy victory of Juda over its enemies. Hence, the sovereignty of Juda in the house of David was to last until the Virgin-birth of the Messias; and this was fulfilled in the time and in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth. For, when He was born in Bethlehem, the city of David, an alien power for the first time in the nation's history reigned over Judea in the person of Herod the Great by the appointment of Caesar. But the generation of Jesus was in this wise: Whereas His Mother, Mary, was espoused to Joseph

of the house of David, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost; and they going up, by order of Augustus Caesar, to Bethlehem, their own city, to be enrolled, her time was accomplished and she brought forth her first-born son and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn (Luke, ii, 4-7).

The divine wisdom and miraculous works predicted of the Messias by the prophets were to constitute the peculiar evidence of His advent among His people; and these were precisely the proofs which accredited Jesus in His mission, and to which He appealed. For, when John the Baptist, true to his Mission even in prison, sent his own obstinate disciples to Jesus for their enlightenment, the Lord said: "Go and relate to John what you have seen. The blind see; the lame walk; the dumb speak; the lepers are cleansed; the dead rise again, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who shall not be scandalized in me." My Brethren, the chief burden of the prophecies was the rejection and the slaying of the Messias by His own people. Jesus came into the world as the predestined victim to be immolated for sin; and therefore He walked meekly and humbly, as the Lamb of God, and sought the company of sinners to win them back to the Father. This manner and appearance, notwithstanding His wonderful teaching and His glorious works, was made an occasion by the proud leaders of the people for scorning and rejecting Him. As Isaias foretold of the Messias, "He shall be a sanctification to many, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of scandal to both houses of Israel, for a snare and a ruin to the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (Isaias, viii. 14). Hence the warning Jesus gave to the Jews and to all men: "Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me." And, "If you will not believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins." Jesus Christ, the true Messias and Incarnate Son of God, is the

only foundation of the individual moral life and hope, and of the social welfare and the national stability. Since His death and resurrection, He is "the stone which the builders rejected and which has become the head of the corner"; yet by the attitudes of men towards Him, He is the occasion of the rise and fall of many. He is the firm rock of ages for the salvation of all who are willing to be of the truth, and a stone of stumbling to the proud and insincere; and the result must be, that, as He himself has warned mankind, "Whosoever, therefore, shall fall against this stone shall be bruised; but on whomsoever this stone shall fall, it shall grind him to powder."

The Jews had no warrant for interpreting the Messias' mission in a political and national sense. Their nationality was expressly limited to the time of His advent; and all the prophets portrayed the character of the Messias' universal reign in features purely spiritual and religious—the reign of divine faith and grace throughout the Gentile world until the end of time. And thus, my Brethren, the Hebrew prophecies, read in the light of the history of Jesus, most clearly show us that Revealed Religion is one in all ages; that one and the same Divine Mind inspired both the prophets and the Apostles, and that in Jesus and His Church the whole history of human salvation finds its legitimate conclusion and its crowning glory. Let us live and advance in the faith and love of the Son of God by constant communion with Him through the Sacraments of the Church.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the Prophet Isaias."—John, i, 23.

The coming of the Eternal Son of God in our nature was the holiest of mysteries, and was designed for the sanctification and salvation of men. And, therefore, a preparation of soul by the moral and spiritual dispositions of faith, repentance and love was necessary for the Jews if they were worthily to receive so Holy a Messias and King. They were to "cleanse their consciences from the dead works of sin to serve the living God; for the Kingdom of God was come upon them." One of the chief public signs of the actual advent of the Messias foretold by the prophets was the appearance in Judea of His immediate forerunner and herald, John the Baptist, who was to prepare the people for His reception. "Thus saith the Lord by the mouth of Isaias the Prophet. Be comforted, my people, for your evil is come to an end. The voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make straight the paths of our God, and the glory of the Lord shall appear. And I will pour out upon you clean water, saith the Lord, and you shall be washed from all your iniquities. . . . And now seek ye the face of your God; for your eyes shall see Him, and you shall say: The Lord is magnified in the borders of Israel" (Isaias, XL).

John the Baptist came, preaching faith in Jesus and administering the Baptism of Penance; and the entire nation went out to hear him. He asserted the presence of the Incarnate Son of God among them and directly pointed Him out in the Person of Jesus. "There is one in the midst of you whom you know not, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to loose; and that He

may be made manifest in Israel I am come, baptizing with water unto penance. . . . And I give testimony that this is the Son of God. . . . He is the bridegroom that hath the bride, but the friend of the bridegroom, standing by, rejoiceth to hear His voice and see Him increase. This my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. . . . For He is the Beloved Son whom the Father hath sent from above, and He speaketh the words of God. He that believeth in Him hath life everlasting; but he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him." Then, seeing Jesus passing near, John cried out: "Behold the Lamb of God—behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world."

The unbelieving Pharisees, backed by the Sanhedrim, came to question John concerning his character and mission; and to them he said: "Ye offspring of vipers! Think not that, without faith and penance, you shall escape the wrath to come! For the ax is even now laid to the root of the trees; the flail and the fan are in the hands of the Christ, and He will thoroughly cleanse His floor, and will gather the wheat into His barn, but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire." At the preaching of John the people, in great part, repented, confessed their sins, and received his baptism as a pledge of their willingness to receive the Messias. And they might have acknowledged him in Jesus had not their rulers and leaders furiously opposed the work of salvation by menacing them with expulsion from the Synagogue, or excommunication; by contriving John's imprisonment, and by pursuing Jesus relentlessly till they compassed His crucifixion.

But, while for this crime the Hebrew race has been dispersed into all nations, without a city or a country, Jesus has taken possession of the religious and moral world for all time, and exerts through His Church a constant and universal mission of enlightenment and regeneration. The perpetuity of His Church—One,

Catholic and Apostolic, through the storms and vicissitudes of nineteen centuries is the standing miracle which proclaims His Divinity and challenges the conscience of mankind in the duty of allegiance to Him. And this also the prophets were given to foresee and predict: "The word of the Lord by the mouth of Isaias the prophet concerning His Holy One who is to come: It is a small thing that Thou shouldst be my servant only to raise up the tribes of Jacob. Behold I have given Thee to be the light of all nations; that Thou mayest be my salvation even to the utmost bounds of the earth. For the strength of the Gentiles shall come to Thee, and they shall be Thy inheritance saith the Lord God of hosts" (Isaias, XLIX).

To them that believe in His name the God-man has given the power to be made the sons and heirs of God. And His design is, to apply to each of His followers the divine fruits of His atonement by effecting His spiritual birth in our souls. Hence, our celebration of the approaching anniversary of His advent into the world must be more than a historical reminiscence or an outward commemoration. It must be the renovation of our souls through the cleansing and sanctifying grace of Christ's sacraments. Union with Christ—actual and personal, in spirit and in power—is the ultimate purpose of the Divine Incarnation; otherwise, for us this adorable Mystery is of no avail. "I am the vine, and you are the branches, and My Father is the husbandman. Abide therefore in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in me; for without me you can do nothing." And having thus concluded His last discourse to His disciples, Jesus prayed: "Holy Father, keep them one in us. That I may be in them as Thou, Father, in me; that they may all be consummated in one." Let us, therefore, with a lively faith and with contrite and grateful hearts, prepare for the

worthy reception of our merciful Saviour, who comes to us in a way far more intimate than that of His advent of old to the once Chosen People; while bringing with Him into our souls inward peace and joy and the divine pledge of our eternal salvation.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE INCARNATION

"And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."—Luke, iii, 6.

According to the sense attached by the prophets to the expression, "The Salvation of God," we are to understand it to mean the Saviour—the Messias. At the appearance of the great Forerunner, John the Baptist, the Chosen People were to see among them the Saviour, Christ, and ever after the world was to experience the blessings of His advent.

But if Christ is to be to us a Saviour we must recognize and acknowledge Him truly as He is. For ignorance and wrong-thinking in regard to Him, while being a dishonor towards God, distorts and stifles the religious life of man; as we see in the spiritual aberration and destitution among the sects in consequence of their erroneous conception of Jesus.

The all-important question was proposed by the Saviour Himself to the leaders of the Jews: "What think ye of Christ?" And, again, to His Apostles: "Whom do you say that I am?"

It will not do to answer, with the Jews, that He was David's son; for that was only half the truth; and David, by divine inspiration, called Him Lord. Neither will it do to say that Christ was the Son of God in the sense that men in God's grace and favor are sons of God; for this is only by adoption, and is a

mercy extended to regenerated and repentant sinners through the infinite merits of Christs' Atonement. Nor will it do, in imitation of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, to extol Jesus for superior wisdom and holiness, and yet deny that He is what He declared and proved Himself to be. The proud spirit of infidelity has exhausted every subterfuge in its effort to shirk the truth of His Godhead; even to the extent of collecting His sayings concerning His Human Nature and holding them up to the unwary as militating against the doctrine of His Divinity. Jesus was manifestly true and perfect man, and He declared and proved Himself to be also true God; and, hence, to make Himself known as He was, He spoke to the Jews concerning both His Natures —Human and Divine. He said of His Humanity: "The Father is greater than I"; and He also said of Himself, what could justly be said only of God—"I and the Father are one." Of His Humanity He said lowly things: "Learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart"; yet He also said of Himself things absolutely Divine: "I am the Beginning who speak to you. Before Abraham was made I am. I am the resurrection and the life. He who seeth me seeth the Father also." The Jews on hearing these expressions from His lips sought to slay Him "because," said they, "thou, being a man, makest thyself God." But Jesus confirmed His words by the argument of God—His miracles, and said, "If you will not believe my word, yet believe for the work's sake. Behold, they give testimony that I am He." Jesus acted toward the Jews with a wise and merciful economy. He was to give them the occasion for slaying Him, as the prophets foretold, for the assertion of His Divine Sonship; but at the appointed time; that is, at the demand of the constituted religious authority of the nation, and under circumstances commanding the attention of the Hebrew people and the world. Hence, until that solemn occasion He hides His glory, and appeals only to His

miracles and the fulfilment of the prophecies, while asserting His Divinity in words which only implied it. This He did lest His enemies should become, in their obstinacy, even yet more guilty, and lest they should be constantly attempting to slay Him before the time. But, when standing for his mock trial before the Sanhedrim, He uttered His direct claim of Deity: and, being adjured in the name of God to say if He were the Christ, the Son of the Living God, He answered: "Thou hast said it." It was for this answer that Jesus was condemned to death.

Jesus Christ is the union of the Divine and the human natures in the Person of the Eternal Word—the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. In assuming our nature the Eternal Word took the most pure blood of the Immaculate Virgin Mary; fashioned of it, in her womb, His Human body; infused into that body a new-created human soul, and, in the same instant, placed Himself as the term, or personality—in which the Divine and Human natures united to constitute Christ. We acknowledge, therefore, in Jesus two natures—the nature of God and the nature of man. The Human Nature of Jesus is complete and perfect, as in ourselves—composed of a human body and soul, and endowed with a human intellect and a human will; but without a human personality—there is no human person in Christ. Its place in His Human Nature was anticipated and preoccupied by the Eternal Word. And this entails no defect in Christ's Humanity, but, on the contrary, is for it an infinite nobility and perfection. For, as it is more noble for any created nature to subsist in a higher personality than its own—for example, the animal nature in us, by its subsistence in our rational personality, is nobler than the same animal nature as it subsists in the brute; so, in Christ, the subsistence of the human nature in the Person of the Eternal Word is for it an absolutely Divine and infinite perfection. Hence the infinite worthiness of Christ's Humanity; for it is the

assumed Humanity of the Eternal Word. Hence also the infinite moral value of His human acts and sufferings; for they are *theandric,* that is, divine and human at once; the Person responsible for them, and to whom they must be attributed, being no other than the Eternal Word—God the Son.

It is from the Eternal Word that the human sufferings of Jesus derive their redeeming value. Were there a human person in Jesus, His human sufferings would have only a human and limited moral value, and consequently would be inadequate for the redemption of the world; for no human person could by any sufferings atone for the sins of the human race. But, as the Person in Christ is the Eternal Word, who is the responsible moral source of Christ's human sufferings, the Passion and death of the Godman for human sin were an infinite atonement.

Jesus, then, in His Humanity, as in His Divinity, is the just object of adoration, and of the supreme faith, hope and love of mankind. This is the "Salvation of God"—this is our Saviour. When, therefore, on the approaching anniversary of His advent into this world for our salvation, we kneel in spirit before the grotto of Bethlehem on that all-holy night when Christ was born, and, prostrate with the Church, we adore the infant Godman, let us pledge to Him our sincere allegiance, and allow the lesson of God's love for us to take everlasting possession of our hearts. For "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that all who believe in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting."

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

THE PRESENTATION OF THE CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

"Dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace. Because my eyes have seen thy salvation. Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples."—Luke, ii, 29.

The first public official act of the Saviour, while yet in His infancy, was the acknowledgment and worship of God in His temple. As the Eternal Word, the temple belonged to Him as the unique seat of His glory on earth; and, as man, Jesus was the high priest who alone stood in the temple by His own right, both as the representative of God and the head and representative of the human race; and by His presence there He fulfilled the promises and expectation of ages. For "Thus saith the Lord by the mouth of Malachy the Prophet: 'Your victims I will receive no longer. . . . Behold I send my messenger before my face.' And presently the Lord whom you seek and the Angel of the Testament whom you desire shall come to His temple." And Aggeus said: "Who is left among you that saw this house in its first glory? . . . Yet now take courage . . . for yet a little and I will move all nations, and the desired of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord. . . . And great shall be the glory of this last house more than of the first."

Jesus submitted to all the ordinances of the Hebrew law, as they were prophetic of Him; and, by submitting, He fulfilled and abolished them; for He was the reality and substance whom they prefigured and foreshadowed. The Temple itself was to last only until the generation of the Messias. Mary also, His Immaculate Virgin-Mother, though naturally and legally exempt from the law of Purification fulfilled its provisions in the spirit of humility.

and of obedience to the divine economy; and, forty days after the birth of Jesus, carried Him to the temple to offer Him up to the Eternal Father, and ransom Him with the alms of the poor, according to the law. And as she entered with the Divine Child, there followed her the aged and renowned Simeon. This holy man and true prophet had long prayed for the coming of the Messias; he had treasured up the predicted signs that denoted the precise time for the actual advent of Christ among the Jews; and he looked for Him, not, like the false Judaists, among the opulent and so-called great, but among the God-fearing and poor of God's people. He had even received the consoling answer from the Holy Ghost that, aged as he was, he was not to die until he had seen the Christ of the Lord. Hence he constantly lingered within the precincts of the temple, and observed closely the Hebrew mothers as they came to fulfil the law and offer their first born sons to the Lord. On this occasion he recognized the Messias in the child of Mary and requested that He be given into his arms; and there, amid the concourse of people at the solemn hour of the Morning Sacrifice, the aged saint and seer broke forth into the inspired revelation which has embraced the world in its light: The Infant Jesus in his arms is the light and glory of the world —the long-promised Saviour, the centre and the consummation of all human history, and the arbiter of the destinies of mankind. According to their attitudes towards Him He will be the occasion of the rise and fall of men and of empires. The many who will be saved will owe their salvation to Him, and whoever perishes will incur his perdition by his opposition to Him. Through all the ages to come He shall challenge the conscience of mankind. Around Him shall be waged the ceaseless war of human allegiance and human revolt, and at His feet the paths of men shall part to meet no more forever. Such is the mighty burden of Simeon's prophecy.

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The poor and lowly condition in which the Incarnate God appeared among us was chosen by Him as a divine rebuke and a healing lesson to human pride and avarice. But this condition was made by the impenitent worldlings of Judaism the occasion of His rejection and of their condemnation. To-day, as then, the presence of the Godman, though sufficiently manifest in the standing miracle of His imperishable, supernatural Church, is not of a character to overwhelm the intellectual and moral obstinacy of modern worldlings, who take occasion, therefore, from the poverty and the lowly condition of the millions of the Church's children among all races to despise her and refuse allegiance to Him. It is the same detestable Judaic pride, which would measure the claims of the Saviour of mankind by the earthly tests of national and commercial supremacy, and which demands that He be the compliant patron only of the wealthy and cultured.

Jesus, in offering up to the Blessed Trinity His deified Humanity, performed an act of divine and adequate worship of the Almighty Creator, both on His own part, as man, and on behalf of the human race, of which He is the head and representative—its eternal priest and its atoning victim. He inaugurates in the temple the eternal Redemption which He will consummate on the Cross and will perpetuate in the adorable Sacrifice of the Eucharist. And Mary, in the clear knowledge of the sublime mystery, and kneeling in adoration in the temple with her Divine Child in her arms, offers Him up to the Eternal Father in the same heroic spirit in which she will at last offer Him on Calvary. Let us remember this scene when we assist at Holy Mass, and, as an essential requirement on our part, let us offer ourselves to God in union with the Divine Victim, and we shall be accepted. Consider and strive to imitate Mary's wonderful life of union with Jesus in all the years of His infancy, childhood and youth. Her thirty years of intimate communion with the Godman in adoring

faith and love; in simplicity and quiet retirement; in prayer and labor—advancing always in the perfection of spiritual likeness to Him, as, physically, she resembled Him. It is the true and blessed life of the children of God, and the prelude to a divine and an endless beatitude.

FIRST SUNDAY IN JANUARY (EPIPHANY)

FAITH

That men might at all times be guided to the attainment of eternal salvation God revealed the truth to mankind under various progressive Dispensations throughout the ages until the fullness of the Divine Revelation in Jesus, who declared and proved Himself to be the Christ — the Eternal Son of God Incarnate.

As St. Paul says,—"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days has spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world" (Hebrews, i, 2).

The doctrine of Christ, being a revelation of the mysteries of the Divine order, must be accepted by an act of faith in His Word. For the human mind is unable to see directly the intrinsic verity of the Christian mysteries, but recognizes their credibility by the external evidence that God has revealed them, and on the principle that He must be believed because He is infinitely wise and truthful and can neither deceive nor be deceived. When, therefore, we possess this external evidence that God has spoken, and our hearts are disposed to believe and obey God, we obtain through Christian Baptism the supernatural gift of faith in the divine doctrine of the Son of God, and we enter the "Kingdom of Heaven," that is, we become members of the Church of Christ, and we sit down as the children of God at the Divine Table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The Son of God speaks to mankind through His Church; and her definite teaching in all matters concerning the Christian

Revelation is weighted with His infallible authority, and demands our faith in her word as the Word of Christ. If we take the Gospels only as a reliable historical source giving us a trustworthy report of the declarations of Jesus to His Apostles, nothing can be more clearly and abundantly shown. He said to them: "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature. . . . Go and teach all nations and command them to believe whatsoever I shall have told you. . . . He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me. . . . He that will believe and be baptized shall be saved, but he that will not believe shall be condemned. . . . I say to thee, Simon, Son of John,—Thou art Peter (a rock), and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And to the eleven, thus organized as His teaching Church, He said: "The Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, will abide with you forever and will lead you into all truth, and I myself will be with you all days even until the consummation of the world." As, therefore, Christ delivered a definite deposit of divine truth to be taught to all men in all ages by an imperishable Church under the guidance of the Holy Ghost and the protection of His own everlasting presence, it is evident that the Church speaks with infallible certainty when definitely declaring to the world what is the revealed Word of God; and that her teaching on matters of Christian faith, wherever it is adequately announced, binds the consciences of men and commands their belief under pain of damnation.

As the Vatican Council declared: "The doctrine of the Christian faith which God has revealed, has not been proposed to us as a philosophy to be debated or to be improved on by human talent; but has been committed as a Divine deposit to the spouse of Christ—His Church—to be faithfully guarded and infallibly interpreted by her."

Without the gift of infallibility to His Church, neither the faith of Christ nor unity of Christian doctrine among men is possible in this world; and, consequently, His Church, which He established for all ages and sent to teach all nations, could not have survived beyond a dozen years after His Ascension to Heaven. For, Christian faith rests on certitude; otherwise it is not the faith of Christ, but only uncertain and unstable human opinion. But the certitude required as the basis of Christian faith derives from the evident possession of the Word of God and its true meaning; and, as the Word of God proposes to us the mysterious doctrines of the Divine order, which are not the object of human demonstration, but which must be accepted on the authority of the teacher and interpreter, that authority must be the authority of God, or it is only the uncertain word of man; hence, to produce in us the certitude of Christian faith the teacher of God's Word requires the Authority of God, that is, infallibility.

And this prerogative was claimed and acted upon by the Catholic Church as a Christ-given privilege from the beginning. For when, only a few years after Our Lord's Ascension, a serious controversy arose in the Church over the observance of the Mosaic ordinances among the Jewish converts, the Apostles, in Council assembled at Jerusalem, decided the question, and, in the consciousness of the Divine guidance pledged to His Church by the Saviour, formulated their decree abolishing Jewish rites in these remarkable words: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay no further burden on you," etc., thereby claiming to speak with the authority of God. And ever since, in her course down the centuries, both in her corporate capacity and through her Supreme Pontiff, the Successor of St. Peter in the See of Rome, the Catholic Church has acted on the fundamental principle of her doctrinal infallibility. The

result is the unwavering certainty and unity of the Christian faith among her members throughout the world, as Christ intended. And He Himself declared that this divine result should be the chief mark by which His true Church and His own heavenly Mission would be known to men; for thus He prayed: "Holy Father, I have given them Thy Word; Thy word is truth; keep them one in truth that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me."

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

THE DUTY OF PARENTS TOWARD THEIR CHILDREN

"And he went down with them to Nazareth and was subject to them."—Luke, ii, 51.

Every phase in the life of Our Saviour reveals to us sublime mysteries and momentous lessons. In his childhood Jesus enlightens the teachers of Israel and solves the social problems of the world. At the age of twelve, using the Hebrew boy's privilege, he attends the Paschal Conferences in the Temple, and, without revealing His Messiahship to them, holds a long dispute with the Doctors of the Law. The Doctors were astounded at the wisdom of the Divine Child, and, with all the multitude, applauded Him. It was amid this scene of glory that Mary, His Mother, and Joseph entered the Temple, and their cruel sorrow gave place to unbounded joy.

But Jesus had equally important moral lessons to teach the world in His childhood, and "He went down with them to Nazareth, and was subject to them." By this He dignified domestic society as the work of God established on the foundation of reverence and subordination. God had early legislated for the

stability of the family as the basis and unit of human society, and, from the summit of Sinai, had reformulated the law that must govern the relations between parents and children; and He said: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived in the land, and mayest inherit a blessing." This law prescribes the duties and right of man in his threefold relations to his fellowman, that is, in domestic, civil and religious society. As to domestic society, which was consecrated by the childhood and youth of the Incarnate Son of God, let us consider the correlative duties and rights of parents and children.

The law enjoins upon children the duty of love and obedience toward their parents, and on parents the duty of protecting, providing for and properly rearing their children. Children, therefore, who knowingly and deliberately despise parental authority "resist the ordinance of God and purchase to themselves damnation." And, as constant experience attests, such unnatural ingrates become a curse to themselves and to society, and either go down in disgrace to a premature death or are landed by their own vices in a felon's cell.

On the other hand, parents are commanded to be protectors and providers for their children in their threefold necessity—physical, intellectual and moral. The whole duty of parents is briefly summarized by St. Paul: "To piously receive and bring up children in the discipline of the Lord." "Piously to receive children." For the necessities of human society and the temporal and eternal happiness of countless human beings destined for Heaven, God instituted marriage and called to that state the generality of mankind. Piously, therefore, to receive children is the sacred and essential end of marriage; and every practice in contravention of the natural and divine law of conception or of childbirth is a heinous mortal sin incurring the penalty of eternal damnation. "To bring up children in the

discipline of the Lord," that is, in the knowledge, the holy fear and love of God and the practices of religion.

Christian truth and religious observance should be inculcated early upon the child conjointly in the home, the church and the Christian school. But the first and chief responsibility for this education lies with the parents in the home, which should not therefore be a pagan contrast and contradiction to the Christian school and the church, as too many homes are. And the case is generally much worse. For such unreligious parents refuse to their children the countless advantages of Christian training, and send them to the secular schools, where the absence of all religious teaching, if not the presence of positive anti-Christian teaching, completes the spiritual and moral perversion of their children. Thus they sacrifice the souls of their children to the Moloch of Social Ambition and intellectual pride.

Parents should rule their children by wise correction, lest they grow head-strong and end in breaking their own necks and their parents' hearts. But excessive and angry punishment is harmful as begetting in their children hatred for their parents, or making them weak-spirited and timid. Is it necessary to admonish Christian parents to be vigilant and firm in guarding their children from the contamination of corrupt companions, vile resorts and immoral books? Woe to parents who are negligent in this respect!

The law commands that parents give to their children the light and encouragement of their own good example.

The child is necessarily subject to the influence of example, good or bad. The moral pliability of children admits of their being easily molded to virtue or to vice. Their indelible retention of early impressions and their instinct to imitate those whom they revere and love, make them the helpless charges depending on and appealing to the humanity of mankind; and therefore,

parents especially must beware lest by their bad example they warp the moral life and endanger the eternal salvation of their children.

Let the childhood and youth of the Son of God amid the Holy Family at Nazareth be our model and encouragement. Mary and Joseph were poor, and were sorely tried; but they had Jesus, and were infinitely enriched in Him; and they were led on by God and crowned with joy at last; and the light of this divine example has created many millions of Christian families, sustained by faith and prayer; maintaining peaceful and cheery homes where God is feared and loved; where mutual charity lightens all burdens and sweetens all trials, and where venerable parents, consoled by the respect and affection of numerous and prospering children, bequeath to their posterity—together with the treasure of their religion—their encouraging example as the guiding star of conduct and the most cherished memory of life.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

MARRIAGE

"And Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the marriage."—John, ii, 2.

The first public appearance and the first miracle of the Son of God, Our Saviour, occurred at a marriage-feast. God had instituted marriage at the origin of the human race as the exclusive and life-long domestic association of husband and wife for the reception and rearing of children; for the preservation and moral order of society, and for the ultimate eternal happiness of countless generations of mankind. Hence from the beginning mar-

riage possessed a sacredness, a unity and a binding force unlike and superior to all other social ties; and the family was the indestructible basis and indivisible unit of human society.

Owing to human perversity, marriage was, at the advent of Christ, universally desecrated by the prevalence of divorce; and the consequent moral condition of the age merited from the Savior the appellation "An adulterous generation." The first social work, therefore, of Jesus, was the restoration of marriage to its original unity and indissolubility and its elevation to the holiness of a Sacrament of the New Christian Law, and He said: "What therefore God has joined together let no man put asunder" (Matt., xix, 6).

To the Jews who sought to justify divorce by the authority of Moses, Jesus explained: "Moses by reason of the hardness of your hearts"—to put a stop to wife-murdering—"permitted you to put away your wives; but in the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery. And if the wife shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery" (Mark, x, 11-12).

On this law of the Son of God the Catholic Church stands to-day, as in the past, when she withstood the rage of the popular passions and the tyrannical power of the crowned heads and mailed fists of history. With St. Paul she says: "To them that are married, not I, but the Lord commandeth that the wife depart not from her husband; and, if she depart, that she remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. . . . The woman that hath a husband is bound to the law while her husband liveth. Therefore while her husband liveth she shall be called an adultress if she be with another man. Let wives therefore be subject to their husbands as the Church is subject to Christ; and let

husbands love their wives as Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it" (1 Cor., vii, 10).

The Church in her Ritual emphasizes the divinely established indissolubility of marriage by insisting that the contracting parties mutually plight their intended life-long union in her presence by the formula: "I take thee,—to have and to hold; for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in health or in sickness; until death do us part."

Marriage should not be entered into lightly or from low motives of sensuality, ambition or avarice, because it has its severe divine laws, its stern responsibilities and its formidable difficulties, which only the grace and blessing of God and a high-minded devotion to duty and honor can enable men to fulfil and sustain.

The general unspiritual concept of marriage and the low motives from which it is entered upon, the immoral and criminal practices against its essential laws, with consequent mutual disrespect and the loss of domestic love; the reliance on the facility of divorce, which induces hasty and ill-sorted marriages and as hasty separations,—these are the unfortunate conditions which are making our country almost the completest divorce-ridden nation in the civilized world.

Some recent attempts have been made in several of the States to limit this social menace by a stricter and more uniform legislation, but in spite of civil statutes the source of the evil remains; and until society returns to the Christian ideal of marriage as a holy and indissoluble contract, sacramentally binding husband and wife to life-long domestic association under the sanction of God, it will be impossible to turn back the adulterous flood that is sapping the moral character and the physical energy of the nation.

And while there is some hope for the social and national future from the stand of the Catholic Church against divorce, and from

the noble obedience and rational moderation of a great Catholic people in relation to the divine laws of marriage, yet too frequently are our Catholics found transgressing the laws of the Church relating to matrimony,—notably as to the law of clandestinity,—they go off and "marry outside the Church." The commandments of the Church bind her subjects under mortal sin. The legislative authority given to the Church by her Divine Founder extends over her members in all matters pertaining to their moral relations with their fellowmen and to the use and ministration of the sacraments. Catholics, therefore, who, in defiance of the Church's prohibition, attempt clandestine marriage defy the authority of Christ in the Church; involve themselves in a life of sinful and disgraceful concubinage, and incur the severest ecclesiastical censure, which cuts them off from the sacraments and prayers of the Church.

Let us beware of the moral pestilence in the principles and conduct of an apostate society amid which our lot is cast. The daily press frequently reeks with it. In articles which go unchallenged the foulest attacks are made upon the divine constitution and laws of marriage; the dishonorable disruption of families is applauded, and the adulterous alliances of husbands with their adulterous "affinities" are approved on the detestable plea of free love, which is the title by which is advocated a lawless animal lust, over which, it is shamelessly asserted, we have no control.

As we are rational beings, so are we moral beings; and it is our Christian duty to watch over and control the emotions of our hearts as well as the movements of our minds. We are responsible before God for the character and course of our affections as we are for the trend and scope of our judgments; and we can control and suppress our bad passions in regard to forbidden objects and immoral seductions by the faith and the grace

of our Divine Religion and the prudent flight of the occasions of sin.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

OUR SALVATION

"Go ye into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just."—Matt., xx, 4.

In the language of the Sacred Scriptures, while the expression, "The Vineyard of the Lord," usually and primarily means the Church of God, it is often, as here also, used to designate the soul of man, which needs to be cultivated for God and Heaven.

Designing to communicate to us His goodness and to make us partakers of His own happiness, God created us to His image and likeness, bestowing on us a noble, spiritual and immortal soul, capable, by His grace, of attaining to the vision and possession of God, and incapable of finding its satisfaction in anything less than God. Hence, it is a part of rational prudence and of Christian wisdom to be deeply impressed with the prime importance of the salvation of our souls. To attain to the divine purpose of our existence should be the chief and earnest endeavor of our life, lest, by our folly, we should thwart the design of Infinite Goodness, to our eternal loss and endless sorrow.

To redeem us from our sins and their eternal penalty, and to make us His adopted children with all the rights and titles of Heaven, God decreed the Incarnation and death of His Own Eternal Son, "who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven and was made man." As the Holy Ghost, by the pen of St. Paul, says: "He would draw us by the chords of

Adam; and, therefore, because the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also in like manner became partaker of the same." And Jesus loved us beyond all comprehension, and delivered Himself up for us to the suffering and ignominy of the Cross, "that all who believe in His Name and love His coming may not perish, but may have life everlasting."

The riches, honors and pleasures of this world, for which so many, with appalling folly, abandon their eternal salvation, will soon fail us; while we ourselves are rapidly nearing the end of our earthly existence; and then our immortal souls, with their insatiable yearning for happiness unfulfilled, must either attain to the Supreme Good in the endless life beyond or be forever undone and lost.

Whatever may be the imperfect happiness derived from the rational and Christian use of earthly goods, it is certain that the abandoned sensualist is already the most unhappy of men. Self-contempt torments him; remorse lacerates him; despair prostrates him; and outraged conscience confronts him with the sense of his mortal guilt and of the dread accounting that awaits him at the end for his perverted moral being and the trampled rights of God. Hence our Saviour's warning: "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?"

The rational creature can attain to salvation only by doing the will of God. God's holy and beneficent will is revealed to us in the Commandments. The frequent reception of the sacraments and the habit of prayer are the divinely assured means of grace and salvation. They enlighten and strengthen the soul and enable us to fulfill the will of God—to keep the Commandments. The Son of God acts upon us through the sacraments, which convey to our souls His illumining, cleansing and sanctifying grace, and thus bring us into personal contact and communion with Him, the

fount of all light and moral strength, and enable us to triumph over all the obstacles to our salvation. Whoever, therefore, makes good and frequent use of the sacraments and devotes himself to prayer will be saved. Whoever abandons these means will be lost. What immeasurable folly it is for men to live on in their deadly sins without the least effort to rise out of them—without even having recourse to God for help, but, growing daily more hardened in sinful habits, run the appalling risks of final impenitence and eternal damnation!

Consider the reward of this life's short day of labor in the cultivation of our souls. "Go ye into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just." Salvation is the heaven of a divine and endless happiness with God. Our Saviour calls it a just pay; for, by His gratuitous and infinitely generous promise He has pledged His word to crown with eternal happiness all who will love and serve Him. Hence, St. Paul calls the reward of a Christian life "a crown of justice laid up by the Just Judge for him and for all who keep the faith and fight the good fight and finish their course for God and Heaven.

And let all who would work out their salvation beware of the further malignant tricks of the enemy. Having led men into sin, the devil endeavors to fill the repentant with distrust of God, as if the All-Merciful Father of souls had ceased to love them on account of their past offenses. We should be able easily to overcome this diabolical temptation by the remembrance that the Eternal God became man and died for sinners, and that He readily pardoned the worst sinners when penitent, and gave them special proofs of His love; as we see in Mary Magdalen and St. Peter and St. Augustine, and so many other great sinners, who, by the grace and love of Christ, became great Saints and the dearest friends of God. "The Lord is good to all that hope in Him; to every soul that seeketh Him."

And again, the temptation to discouragement, by which the enemy seeks to dissuade men from the work of their salvation, will be easily met by the triumphant force of our love for God; for, as St. Augustine declares—"Give me a man that loves, and he will understand that nothing is hard to a lover." Let us earnestly ask of God the gift of His love, which is the life and power of all the law and of every virtue. And "let us remember that we are the children of the Saints, and we look for that life which God will give to those who never change their faith from Him" (Tobias, ii, 18).

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

MORTAL SIN

"And that which fell among thorns, are they who have heard, and going their way, are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit."—Luke, viii, 14.

It is mortal sin that stifles the saving word of God in our souls and renders it fruitless. It is a deliberate thought entertained or word spoken, or deed done, against the law of God in a grave or serious matter, that is, a matter which we know to be seriously opposed to the Divine honor or to our own or our neighbor's eternal or temporal welfare. To constitute a mortal sin there must be a weighty matter of the law; a full advertence of the mind to the moral gravity of our act, and a full consent of our will. As to the matter of the law, when the Scriptures pronounce a "Woe" against a certain wrong conduct, or when they designate certain deeds as "Works of the flesh excluding us from the Kingdom of God," we must conclude that such conduct and such deeds are mortal sins. Thus: "Woe, to you, apostates, who have abandoned and forgotten me that you might add sin upon sin. . . . Woe to you that follow drunkenness. . . . Woe to you unjust and avaricious . . . know you not that neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor thieves, nor extortioners shall possess the Kingdom of God?"

We should endeavor to realize more and more the immeasurable malignity of mortal sin in order that, with the help of God, we may conceive a due horror of it and become confirmed in our purpose to avoid it as the greatest of all evils.

Mortal sin deals a malicious blow at the honor of God and His sovereignty over us, and gives a fatal stab to the life of grace in our souls; it makes us enemies of God and slaves of

the devil; it lacerates the conscience with a remorse which nothing can relieve; it induces in us a tyrannous habit whose end is final impenitence and whose punishment is eternal damnation. By mortal sin we scorn the honor and majesty of God and practically deny His sovereignty over us; and in His place we substitute self and the gratification of unruly passions as the object of our supreme desire and final choice. Hence the Divine complaint: "Thus saith the Lord—if I be your God, where is my honor? If I be your Father, where is my reverence? Be astounded, O ye heavens, I have created and brought up children, and they have despised me!"

Divine sanctifying grace gives the soul a participation of the nature and life of God. But mortal sin destroys God's life and likeness in the soul, and hurls us from Him into utter darkness—spiritually blasted and dead.

By mortal sin a man hates what God loves, and loves what God hates. And while God does not become our enemy in the sense that we understand by enemy, yet He is opposed to the sinner in mortal sin with all the eternal, infinite weight of the Deity. Hence the frightful folly of puny man to raise up against himself such an opponent.

Certain mortal sins, of a sensuous kind, speedily engender a sinful habit, or a fixed disposition and facility for repeating the sin with great frequency; so that the sin acquires the force of second nature and exerts a tyrannous power over the enfeebled will. In certain Southern countries, where vegetation is of a large and luxurious growth and the reptile life assumes great proportions, we come upon the silent haunts of the boa-constrictor. And as down the mountain trips the young, unsuspecting fawn, in search of the cool waters of the brook in the shade of the overspreading trees, there, coiled around an overhanging limb, awaits the cunning, patient boa. And, when the fawn is

engaged in slaking its thirst, the great serpent stealthily glides from the tree, and, swiftly winding its long muscular body in many a coil around the fawn, exerts its deadly constricting force and breaks the animal's back. It is a true picture of the action of the sinful habit upon the will; although, most certainly, the power of the grace of Christ, when sincerely and frequently sought for in the sacraments of His Church, is victorious over the most inveterate sinful habit.

The most fatally destructive of all moral forces, mortal sin, in its nature and consequences, is irremediable; and without the intervention of the Son of God, there could be no deliverance or restoration of the sinner. But, moved by His love for us, Jesus heroically undertook its atonement; and, if we would see its utter wickedness in the light of God, we must look up at His Incarnate Son writhing in torture, bleeding and dying for it on the Cross. See there, Infinite Innocence condemned for our perversity; Infinite Wisdom put to shame for our malicious folly; Infinite Goodness scorned and crucified for our heartless impiety. Advert to the unspeakable pain which the Saviour endures from the rude spikes that pierce His bleeding, swollen hands and feet, as He hangs for three awful hours until He bows His weary thorn-crowned head and dies overwhelmed with woe. Look upon this work—the work of mortal sin; and, as you still revere God and hope for salvation, deplore and detest this greatest of evils; get rid of it, and resolve to forever avoid it.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

THE PASSION OF CHRIST

"Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man."—Luke, xviii, 31.

From the liturgical offices and prayers of the Church during the approaching Lent it is evident that her mind and heart are entirely occupied throughout the holy season with the memory of our Saviour's redeeming Passion—the sufferings by which Jesus drank for us to the very dregs the bitter chalice of woe.

To-day the Church selects the portion of the Gospel just read in order to direct our thoughts betimes, as Jesus directed the minds of His Apostles, to the great mystery of our Redemption. We shall therefore be in harmony with the spirit of the Church if we devote a few moments this morning to some considerations on the Passion of Christ. That adorable Passion—the last phase in the earthly life of Jesus—is the greatest and most fruitful of devotions. There we see how much God loved us, and we are powerfully drawn to love Him in return; and love is the direct way to God and to all moral power and wisdom. There we see exemplified the fundamental virtues of the Christian life —humility, obedience, constancy and justice; and there we learn to shun sin with horror, seeing the tremendous price that was paid for our deliverance from it, even the precious Blood of a God-man.

In meditating on the Passion of Jesus we should bear in mind that His sufferings were pre-ordained by God for our redemption. Our relation to God is of a moral and religious character; and by our fall from original grace we were spiritually outcast from Him, and were amenable to the claims of His infinite retributive justice; and that divine Justice, for its own due satisfaction and

our redemption, decreed the sufferings of the Incarnate Son of God. As St. Leo expresses it: "Unless Jesus were man He could not suffer; unless He were God His sufferings could bring us no remedy."

This divine plan of redemption was revealed to mankind in the hour of our fall, and the revelation of it was repeated throughout the ages. It was prefigured in the immolation of Isaac; in the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb, and in the setting up of the Brazen Serpent in the desert for the healing of the penitent. It was the chief theme of the prophets. Speaking of the promised Messias, Isaias said: "All we, like sheep, had gone astray . . . but the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all. . . . He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows. . . . He was immolated because He willed it . . . and by His stripes we were healed. . . . He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, not opening His mouth. . . . I beheld Him a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our sins." And Daniel said: "Thus saith the Lord, seventy weeks of years"—four hundred and ninety years—"are set from the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the City and the Temple, when the Christ shall appear. . . . And He shall be slain, and iniquity shall be atoned. . . . And His people that shall deny Him shall be His no more." Again: the Royal Prophet portrayed the Messias grieving and praying in His atoning sorrows: "O God, my God, look upon me . . . the sins of my people cry out upon me . . . our fathers hoped in Thee and were delivered . . . Save my soul from the jaws of the wicked. . . . All the ends of the earth shall remember and shall be converted to Thee." And Jeremias: "All ye that pass by the way attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow." Jesus cited these prophecies and predicted their approaching fulfilment in Himself at the hands

of the Jews in Jerusalem. And He found there ready at hand all the elements that were to contribute to the accomplishment of His death; for He found a degenerate people; a dominant class of proud and avaricious pharisees; a cowardly Gentile ruler, and a traitorous disciple — a Judas. Amid such conditions His Passion was inevitable in view of the abasement enacted by His Incarnation and of the revelation of His Divinity to men determined not to believe Him. His own testimony to Himself gave them the power to accuse and condemn Him.

The sorrows of Jesus were unfathomable, as they sprang from His knowledge and His love. From His knowledge of God; for His human Soul possessed the immediate vision of the Divine Essence—of the face of God. From His knowledge of mortal sin; for He comprehended its immeasurable heinousness as an infinite affront to God. From His love for God and for man; by which He embraced both, and sought, with all the might of a God-man, to reconcile and unite the adorable Creator and His erring creature. His sufferings were intense beyond comprehension, both from His surpassing sensitiveness and the boundless cruelty of the Jews; and He was buffeted in the face, dragged about, thrown down, scourged, crowned with thorns, mocked, execrated, spit upon and crucified.

To Jesus, therefore, the Divine Victim and hero of eternal justice and love, who, for the honor of God and human redemption, gave His precious life for all and each of us, let us render grateful and loving sympathy by the avoidance of sin and the constant remembrance of His passion. Let us be imbued with the spirit of the Cross. It is the science of the Saints. It fired the Apostles with the love and intrepidity that converted the world. It sustained the martyrs in their heroic testimony for the faith, and it inspired the works of benevolence and charity that have dignified and blessed human society throughout the Chris-

tian ages. Let no one shrink from partaking in the sorrows and humiliation of the Cross of Christ. He, the Incarnate God, has stripped it of all its ignominy and woe, and has made it to be for all who embrace it the source of divinest honor and glory. So teaches St. Paul: "If we suffer with Christ we shall also be glorified with Him." And St. Peter: "This is thanksworthy; for unto this are you called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow His steps. . . . Christ therefore having suffered for us be you also armed with the same thought." And let this saving thought, which is our faith, find expression in devotion, and bring us all together during Lent to make the way of the Cross and to attend daily, if possible, at Holy Mass, which is the perpetuation of the heroic Passion and death of Jesus—the unbloody sacrifice of the same living glorious victim who died for our redemption in Calvary.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST AND OURS

"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil"—Matt., iv, 1.

It was for our instruction that the Incarnate Son of God condescended to suffer the affront of being approached and tempted by the devil. Not that He could be made to experience any inward inclination to evil, as we; but Satan was permitted to propose by external suggestion the forms of sin to which fallen man is inclined, that is, to sensuality, pride and avarice, personified in the devil, the world and the flesh; and Jesus shows us how to overcome them.

Satan knew not the actual accomplishment in Jesus of the

redeeming mystery of the Incarnation; but he was aware that the predicted time for the advent of the Messias was fulfilled; and, beholding the perfect virtue of Jesus, he trembled lest this holy One who had fasted and prayed for forty days in the desert might be the promised vanquisher of his iniquitous power over the world, and the Saviour of mankind. Hence the evil one sought to ascertain whether Jesus were more than man by tempting Him to sin. Jesus had gone into the desert, as an athlete to the battle-field, to meet the enemy of man; and, as man, He overthrew him by piercing his lying and pompous proposals with the sword of divine truth—the word of God. "It is written, not by bread alone doth man live unto God and true happiness, but by every gift of divine truth and grace from the mouth of God. . . . It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" and usurp His power and glory to exalt thyself before men. "It is written, the Lord thy God shalt thou adore and Him only shalt thou serve." These are the fundamental precepts of the eternal law in our relation to God; faith, humility and obedience, which form the crushing answer to every diabolical suggestion, every seduction of the world and every wrong impulse of our fallen nature. Besides his attack on Jesus narrated in the Gospel, Satan pursued our Lord throughout His entire public mission to the Jews. He even called Him "Son of God" by the mouth of the possessed from whom Jesus drove him; but this the evil one did only to incite against our Lord the rage of the spying Pharisees who were watching for a declaration of Divine Sonship from Jesus in order to have a legal cause for destroying Him. It was Satan who possessed the hearts of the Jews on Good Friday.

Satan hates man, and therefore tempts us to sin, because he hates Jesus Christ, the God-man. Infinite Goodness has assumed our nature in Jesus; has become our Brother; has died for our

redemption on the Cross, and has made us heirs to a divine and everlasting happiness; hence the inextinguishable rage and hatred of Satan towards Christ and towards us. And, without any doubt, if the help of God were not with us in the moral combat against such an enemy, none of us would have sufficient strength to overcome him, but, vanquished easily at his first attack, we should become his slaves here and his final victims hereafter. Originally, the evil one, to seduce our first parents, openly assumed the form of the serpent without alarming them—for they feared no evil while they knew no sin—but to-day, in an age of unbelief and of consequent religious ignorance, the fallen spirit exerts a terrific hidden force, and creeps amid human society unseen; while those who are most forward in questioning his very existence are the most certain victims of his evil suggestions.

To undo the work of Christ and destroy His reign among us Satan employs a powerful ally—it is the world—that multitude of men and women who have fully and finally set their hearts on this life only, with its wealth, honors and animal pleasures. While ever restless and truly unhappy, this *world* is the relentless enemy of Christ and the willing servant of the devil. It cooperates with him in ruining souls; and whoever opposes its lying maxims and detestable practises becomes the object of its raillery, its rage and its persecution. It boasts a superior light and a truer liberty than Christ's; when, on the contrary, it's life in bondage, sin and hell. The world obeys the dictates of Satan in revolting from the faith and law of the Son of God and in forming associations of heretical sects and atheistic secret societies opposed to all authority human and divine. In its varied anti-Christian phases it has ranged through every form of blasphemous error from Protestantism to Rationalism, to Pantheism, to Materialism; and, at last, to socialistic anarchy;

blindly glorying in its slavery and seeking to enslave others under the directorate of Free-Masonry, the Archconfraternity of Satan, who is king over all the children of pride.

Our own perverse and unguarded impulses are also a source of temptation to us; and they become the occasion of our fall when we neglect to mortify our senses, to have recourse to God in prayer, and to recall the truths of the revealed faith and law of God. We then become seduced, and we lose our grip upon the reins of our passions, which, like unbridled and unmanageable steeds, drag us headlong into sin. But for all who fear God and have recourse to him Jesus, by His teachings, His grace and His example, is the all-protecting shield against the power of temptation from whatever source. "There is none greater nor stronger than he who fears God. . . . For the Lord Almighty is nigh to all that fear Him—to them that fear Him in truth." If, not tempting God, but walking in holy fear, we curb our senses, avoid the proximate occasion of sin, and seek in prayer and sacraments the forces of divine grace, there is no created power that can induce us to sin. Temptation we shall have; for we must undergo the moral combat for our growth in virtue and the crown of victory. "None are crowned who have not lawfully striven." But God is ever the most interested witness of the combat; His warning voice is clearly heard in our conscience; His encouraging truth shines upon us, and His victorious grace upholds all who in the combat keep the eyes of their soul fixed on Him.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST

"And He was transfigured before them, and His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as snow."—Matt., xvii, 1.

The subject of this day's Gospel is of the utmost importance as being the direct manifestation by Christ of His Divinity, and the divine object-lesson given by Him to His Apostles and, through them, to the world. By virtue of the Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God in our nature the human soul of Jesus always beheld the face of God, and was constantly flooded with the splendor and glory of the Deity. But, being the predestined victim for human sin, the Sacred Humanity of Jesus was not to attain to its complete glory except by the sufferings and death of the Cross. Hence, during His earthly career, while His exterior appearance attracted and awed by His mingled grace and majesty, there was not, habitually, any direct manifestation of His Divinity. He, Himself, insisted that "The Son of man must suffer many things and be put to death, and arise again the third day, and so enter into His glory." But the Apostles obstinately refused to entertain this plan of the "Redemption of Israel." The terrible thought of Jesus being delivered into the hands of His murderous enemies and suffering the shame and torments of the cross was a rock of stumbling to their faith in Him; and therefore out of mercy to them, and to us, who were to receive from them the message of salvation, Jesus granted them the vision of His manifest Divine glory on Mount Thabor.

Selecting the three foremost Apostles, He climbed the mountain with them to the summit, which they reached as the day was declining. There, after listening to His instruction, and

having prayed with Him, the Apostles folded their mantles about them and were soon asleep. It was the frequent custom of Jesus to pass the night in prayer, especially on the eve of conferring upon His Apostles some signal grace; and on this night He continued in prayer, and watched over them. In the early morning dawn, the Apostles awakening beheld Jesus raised up from the earth and transfigured in a blaze of unspeakable splendor; His face shone as the sun and His garments were white as snow, and there appeared on either side of Him Moses and Elias, conversing with Him concerning His Passion that was soon to be accomplished in Jerusalem. The ravishing sight of the Divine glory and beauty of Jesus drew from the Apostles the request to be allowed to contemplate Him there on that mountain forever. Then a bright cloud, the chosen symbol of the Holy Ghost, descended and rested over the head of Jesus, and from out the cloud came the voice of the Eternal Father saying: "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him." At this voice the Apostles fell prostrate in great fear; but Jesus, withdrawing the rays of His glory, came to them in His usual humble appearance, and, touching them, bade them arise and fear not, but to keep the vision secret until after His death and resurrection.

What a wonderful grace was granted to those three Apostles! Will they, in the hour of their trial in Gethsemane and on Calvary, stand firm in faith and loyalty to Jesus by the memory of what they beheld on the Holy Mount? Is it possible that they will forget the manifest Divinity of the heroic Sufferer on the Cross? Alas for human frailty, we know what happened! It is the same disciples, who narrated for us their vision of Jesus in His glory, who also recorded their abandonment and denial of Him in His Passion.

Many momentous lessons are intended for us in this event

on Mount Thabor, and, first, it is necessary for salvation to believe that Jesus is the Eternal God—God the Son, Incarnate. Secondly, it is necessary that we sinners do penance and pray in union with Christ in His atoning Passion.

During the three years of His public mission to the Jews Jesus had given sufficient proofs of His Divinity; but false Judaism, blinded by its pride, rejected Him, while true Judaism, represented by Moses and Elias—the Law and the Prophets—acknowledged and adored Him. It is the same with the worldly-minded and influential to-day in spite of the divine rays of nineteen centuries of victorious faith and grace which distinguish the imperishable Catholic Church as the work of a God-Man, who claims their obedience to His truth and law. "This is my Beloved Son, hear ye Him." This is the Messias promised to Abraham and to his seed forever; the King and Judge of mankind, the Prophet and Priest of the human race; this saving truth is clearly manifested to us in Christ's Transfiguration. But, what the Apostles would not see till after His resurrection, the redeeming mission of the Son of God necessarily embraced both Calvary and Thabor. All the prophets foretold it and all the Law was founded on it; and Jesus purposely connected, in His teaching and life, these two prophetic mountains of destiny for Himself and for mankind. Just before His Transfiguration He predicted both these scenes of His sorrow and of His glory; during the glorious scene on Thabor His converse with Moses and Elias was on His approaching Passion in Jerusalem; and after the Transfiguration He ordained that His Divine glory should be kept a secret until after His death and resurrection. Penance and prayer, therefore, are for us all a necessary co-operation with our Divine Saviour in the work of our regeneration, in order to gain the final glorification which is modeled forth for us in the glorious Transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Thabor.

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

"Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it."—Luke, xi, 28.

The praise of Mary from the mouth of the woman in this day's Gospel gave to Jesus the occasion to at once state the foundation of the greatness of His Mother and to pronounce upon her the highest encomium possible to the rational creature. For, Mary, the Virgin Mother of Jesus, was first and most of all blessed in this, that she, with the utmost docility of faith and love, heard the word of God and kept it,—"Mary kept all these words in her heart"—. Among all creatures she is the highest example of holiness, and on this moral foundation and true blessedness God established in her the privilege and glory of being the mother of His Incarnate Son.

It is with more than human wisdom that the Church persistently urges us to fervent devotion toward the Blessed Virgin Mary;—a devotion which is the practical application of the Christian doctrine and fact of the Communion of Saints; and by this action of the Church the true and ennobling ideal personified in Mary is kept before our minds to lift and direct us to things divine, and to induce us to have confident and habitual recourse to her powerful intercession.

As the Sacred Scriptures begin, and continue, and close with Jesus, so also with Mary. In the hour of our fall God said to Satan: "I will place enmities between thee and the woman,—between her seed and thy seed; thou shalt lie in wait for her heel, and she shall crush thy head." (Gen., iv, 15.) And the Apocalypse closes the written word of God with the same Divine

Revelation: "The old serpent, Satan, hated and persecuted the woman because of her child, who hath redeemed all peoples * * *. But the dragon prevailed not * * *. And the child was taken up to heaven and to His throne, from whence He ruleth the nations" (Apoc., xii.).

Throughout the ages the prophets beheld and sang of Mary in their visions of the Messias.—"Who is she that goeth up from our earth as a white pillar of the smoke of aromatical spices?—Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising,—fair as the moon, bright as the sun, and terrible as an army in battle array?—The daughters saw her and called her blessed,—queens beheld her and wondered. For, the Creator of all things made His tabernacle in her and established her in the hearts of all the righteous and just" (Canticles, vi). And the wonderful work of God predicted by Isaias for the tribe of Juda and the house of David is this: "Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son, and He shall be called Emmanuel—God with us." And as with Jesus, so also with Mary the Gospel opens and closes. In the fulness of the predicted time "The angel of the Lord was sent from heaven to a Virgin of Nazareth whose name was Mary. And entering, he said to her: "Hail full of grace, the Lord is with thee:—blessed art thou above all women. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus; for the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and therefore the Holy One that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of the Most High."

The Virgin Mary having given her consent to this design of God, the Mystery of the Divine Incarnation was instantly accomplished in her:—"The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us." The Virgin Mary is the Mother of God; hence her just title to the singular homage and veneration of mankind, as she

herself predicted: "My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He that is Mighty hath done great things in me; and, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." In consenting to the Divine plan of Redemption Mary heroically embraced the unutterable woes in which the cruel Passion and Death of her Divine Son were to involve her, and hence in her compassion she became the Mother of Sorrows and the Queen of Martyrs,—special titles to our love and gratitude.

But Jesus, the God-man, shares His glory in Heaven with all who suffer and sorrow with Him, and with none more than with His compassionate Mother; and hence, if we would contemplate her in her glory, we must ascend beyond the countless ranks of the Saints and the vast hierarchies of the Angels, and there behold, as St. John beheld, "A great sign in Heaven,—a woman clothed with the sun and crowned with the stars." It is the Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Queen of Heaven, radiant in the splendor of Jesus, her son—the Incarnate Son of God. Mary's intercessory power is co-extensive with the dignity of her Divine Maternity; with her nearness to the throne of God, and with the spiritual needs of the Universal Church of Christ. With the most loving and compassionate interest in our salvation, she exerts her influence in behalf of all who—abandoning sin—will earnestly have recourse to her intercession,—hence her title to our special confidence.

True devotion to Mary implies our imitation of her virtues. The virtues of Mary are most appropriate to our condition;—Her faith in God and in all the truths of His revealed religion;—"Blessed art thou that didst believe";—Her holy fear of the All-Holy and Almighty,—"Holy is His Name";—Her hope in His goodness,—"His mercy is from generation unto generation to them that fear Him"; Her humility, patience and charity.—Who-

ever, relinquishing sin and confident in Mary, will endeavor to copy these her distinguishing virtues will be led by her safely to salvation as by a mother's hand.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

HOLY COMMUNION

"And Jesus seeing the multitude, said: Whence shall we buy bread, that all these may eat."—John vi, 5.

The Son of God in the miracles which He wrought for the bodily needs of men, intended to convey lessons of eternal truth and gifts of divine value. Hence, He who is the Almighty provider for every created life, took occasion of this miraculous multiplication of the loaves to promise the institution of the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist—the Sacrament which, under the touching symbol of our daily bread, contains the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. He said, therefore, to the multitude whom He had miraculously fed: "Seek the bread which perishes not, the bread which the Son of Man will give; I am the bread of life, I am the living bread which came down from heaven; the bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world; Amen I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood you shall not have life in you; For my flesh is food indeed and my blood is drink indeed; As the Living Father sent me and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, the same shall live by me;—He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him, and I will raise him up" (to glory) "on the last day."

The insistent, varied and emphatic declaration of the same thing, contained in those words of the Saviour, leaves no uncertainty in any sincere mind as to His meaning;—He promised to

institute the Great Sacrament by which men were to enter into the most intimate communion with His Sacred Humanity, and, thereby, with His Divinity. In this divine institution Jesus carries out the design of Infinite Goodness to make the rational creature partaker of the life and happiness of the God-man; and it is through our Sacramental Union with Him that we are to participate in the joyful and glorious life of God. All moral life is consummated in the love and happiness of union with the all-perfect one. The infinite Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity have their complete life—their love and happiness—in their union with one another. While they are one and identical with the Divine Nature, they are distinct in Person, one from another and they dwell eternally in one another,—infinitely loving, infinitely happy. Hence, to bring about our union with God,—the source of our eternal happiness, the God-man designed, through the Holy Eucharist, to unite Himself both corporally and spiritually with men in order to sustain here on earth and to consummate in Heaven the initial communication of the Divine life which we receive in baptism; and this design He declared at the Last Supper, when He prayed: "That they be one in us as thou, Father, in me and I in Thee, that they may all be consummated in one."

At the Last Supper, then, Jesus instituted the adorable Sacrament of His Body and Blood under the forms or appearance of bread and wine for the purposes of Divine worship in His Church and of ineffable communion of His followers with Himself. Seated with His Apostles on that memorable night, "Jesus took bread into His sacred and venerable hands, and giving thanks, and blessing, He brake and gave to them saying: 'Take ye and eat, for this is my body which shall be delivered up for you. This do ye in commemoration of me.' Then taking the chalice of wine and giving thanks, and blessing, He gave to them saying: 'Drink ye all of this, for this is the chalice of the new and

everlasting Testament in my blood, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins. This do ye for a commemoration of me.'" (Luke, xxii, 19-20.)

The Apostles, on witnessing this sacramental institution by the Master, and knowing Him to be the Christ and the author of our salvation, accepted His words as the divine evidence of His real presence under those appearances; and they adoringly and lovingly received their first communion at His hands; and they were at the same time made priests of His everlasting Church, and enjoined by Him to celebrate under the same sacramental symbols the tremendous sacrifice and the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. It is a mystery which challenges our faith in and our conscience of the wisdom, power and veracity of the Incarnate God; and therefore we render Him the just homage of our mind, and believe with joy and gratitude. The outward appearances—sustained by Him as a sacramental veil—do not cloud the clear insight of our faith, and they are a necessity of our earthly condition. "For," as St. Chrysostom says, "if we were incorporeal beings, the Saviour would have communicated Himself to us without any sensible veil; but since our souls are united with the body and we must learn through the senses, He conveys and signifies to us, in things perceptible to our senses, the divine things of eternal life which are to be apprehended by the mind enlightened by the word of the Son of God."

Holy Communion effects the most intimate union of our souls with Jesus, whose deified Humanity becomes our spiritual nourishment and the cause of our moral growth and perfection. Hence the wonderful fruits of frequent communion displayed in the spiritual beauty and power of the Church. In an age of religious darkness and desolation the Catholic Church, by reason of the Holy Eucharist, shines before the world as the inspiring example of every high virtue of religious piety and social benevo-

lence. She realizes in the lives of her children, who communicate frequently, the divine ideals of absolute faith and trust in God; of supernatural mastery of the passions; of courage and patience under every trial; of unalterable charity, and an unshakeable reliance on the divine pledge of a future glorious immortality.

But observe: We say these are the fruits of *frequent* communion. While it is certain that a single fervent communion can, of itself, produce the highest moral perfection; yet our perfection is normally worked out in accordance with our human condition, and, therefore, by a continuous and regular process. The normal development of our natural life is progressive, and requires the frequent reception of nourishing and sustaining food. The long-intermittent use of food would weaken our vitality. It is the same with our spiritual life; the frequent supply of the sacramental grace of Christ by communion with Him is needed for our spiritual development and perfection; for the exercise of virtue; for strength under temptation; support in trial, and for our healing after the wounds sustained in the moral combat. Without frequent communion we are left too long exposed to our own perverse inclinations, and we rapidly drift toward earthly things and ways; we lose all taste and relish for the divine joys which God has destined for us; our attachments become material, our passions assume mastery, and vain ambitions lure us with idle dreams, only to abandon us in the end to bitter disappointment.

The early Christians communicated daily; being drawn thereto by their lively faith in the Real Presence and their tender love of Jesus, and impelled also to thus seek strength and consolation to withstand their dangers and trials amid a pagan world. But we have equal if not greater need of frequent communion; for our dangers in many respects surpass those of the early Christians from the deceitful smiles of the modern world, whose toleration springs from religious indifference, and whose corrupting maxims

are luring countless souls from Christ. If the Church commands communion once a year at Easter time, she by no means sanctions annual communion as a sufficient guarantee of Christian moral life. Her intention in fixing a time is only to draw the line beyond which lax and worldly Catholics may not go without incurring her censure. And where is the living, Catholic faith,—the practical Catholicity of those who, merely to fulfil a by-law of their Society or to escape the Church's penal sentence, come as perfect strangers to communion only once a year? We refer them to their own moral experience.

To secure our salvation amid the frightful dangers of this life the Incarnate Son of God stooped to the depths of our lowliness and instituted this adorable Sacrament of His real Presence among us. But the home of His desire is not the lonely tabernacle of the Altar, but the enlightened and chastened souls of those who believe in Him and love Him. Let us, with a lively faith and a fervent love, approach Him often;—monthly, weekly, and even daily, that we may abide in Him and He in us as the constant friend and companion of our days; and He will be with us in the end to receive us to an eternal share in His life of infinite Joy and Glory.

PASSION SUNDAY

THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS LIFE

"Which of you shall convince me of sin? . . . I honor my Father, and you have dishonored me."—John, viii, 46, 59.

The Son of God, having, for our redemption, become a member of the fallen race of man, was necessarily a Man of Sorrows. "In all things, excepting sin, He was found as man," and because He

was also God and had to declare it, He was contradicted, calumniated and pursued to death by His apostate people. His sufferings, while being an atonement for all sin, were a warning, an example and a source of consolation to mankind. Sinners as we all are, penance is our duty, and sorrow and suffering are our due. Besides the common annoyances of every day, there comes in the course of every one's life an important phase characterized by one form or another of severe trial and affliction, under which one's Christian life is subjected to a stern testing, and much will then depend on one's views and behavior. While many have religiously improved under affliction, some have deteriorated. Hence, it is a practical question of great importance, how we should regard the trials of this life and how we should behave under them. Without faith, men are puzzled and dismayed by the enigma and terror of affliction. Ignorant of eternal truth, they have built the temple of their happiness on the uncertain pillars of wealth, honors, pleasures and health, and suddenly these pillars are shaken, and their temple falls, and they are left either unhumanly stoical or unmanfully prostrated, and, in both cases, without hope or consolation.

But we are Christians, and there is a well-known virtue that should distinguish us—Christian patience, which is founded on divine faith and sustained by divine grace, and which, under the greatest afflictions, has exemplified to the world the perfection of heroism among the followers of Christ. Our faith teaches us that all that happens to us, except sin, is ordained of God, and for our ultimate good:—"Know that I alone am. I kill and make alive; I wound and heal." (Deut., xxxii, 39). But "count it all joy and gain when you shall have to suffer divers tribulations; for tribulation begetteth patience, and patience hath a perfect work,"—Christian perfection and eternal happiness.

Our faith teaches us that God sends to every soul what is

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most conducive to its spiritual progress and its final salvation, and that all suffering patiently endured in the grace of God creates in us the virtues that most liken us to our crucified Saviour, and which merit a share in His eternal joy. When entering upon His redeeming Passion Jesus said: "As the Father hath given me command so do I" . . . The chalice, therefore, which my Father hath given me to drink—shall I not drink it?" We should always be able to derive strength and consolation under affliction from the memory of Christ's sufferings for us, and we should put ourselves at the feet of His Cross, and there, while weeping over His sorrows, learn to bear and even forget our own.

Trials and afflictions are usually a mark of God's special care and predilection;—"He chastiseth every son whom He receiveth." We are so weak and so inclined to evil that when all in our life is prosperous and serene we are in danger of becoming proud, self-confiding and careless;—forgetful of God and turning His gifts into occasions of deadly sin. It is then that God, in His mercy, deprives us of them, and compels us to return to Him penitent, humbled and confiding in Him alone; and earnest and energetic at last in the immortal interests of our souls, which otherwise would have been lost eternally. But whatever be the occasion or the nature of our afflictions, or if we bear them with Christian patience, we have the declaration of the Holy Ghost by the pen of St. Paul teaching us that: "The sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. . . . For, by the grace of Christ, our tribulation—momentary and light,—worketh for us above measure an eternal weight of glory" (II. Cor., iv, 17).

As sinners we must do penance. "Unless ye do penance," said our Lord, "ye shall perish." And, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his Cross and follow

me." Now, while, by a sincere use of the great Sacrament of Penance, the virtue of penance is secured, and we are pardoned our dreadful sins, yet a debt of satisfaction remains due for them. "Thy sin," said the Prophet to King David, "is forgiven, but the sword shall never depart from thy house." But, outside the sacramental penance, the surest satisfaction for our sins is the patient endurance of our afflictions in a penitential spirit. And we can never escape the payment of this temporal punishment; for, were we, by murmuring and repining under our trials, to forfeit the graces and mercies they bring to us, we should only defer our debt to the future and more formidable penalties of Purgatory, where the soul is, indeed, saved, "yet so as by fire!"

Thus by the faith of Christ we understand the significance and the providential blessedness of the trials of this life; and by His grace we can meet and endure them with tranquility and hope, and even, if we will, with joy. It is a just, a necessary and a blessed law that the adorable and beneficient will of God should be conformed to in all things by His rational creatures and His adopted children. The Incarnate Son came to do the Father's holy and merciful will for our redemption, and declared that all who conform to that will are "dear to Him as brother, sister and mother." Renouncing all sin, therefore, and instant in prayer, let us, in all afflictions, resign ourselves to the dispositions of our Heavenly Father, and, with Christ, look up through our tears and say always with Him—"Father, Thy will be done." Thus shall we rise from our sorrows, as Jesus rose from His agony in Gethsemane, divinely strengthened and comforted.

PALM SUNDAY

CONFESSION OF SINS

"And the multitude that went before and that followed cried, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."—Matt., xxi, 9.

The triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the scene of His victory over sin and death, with the welcome given Him by the poor and humble of the people, points out to us the lesson and duty at this time of welcoming the Lord of Mercy to our souls in the Sacrament of Penance. Jesus, by His death on the Cross, won for us the pardon of our sins; and instituted in His Church the Sacrament of God's pardon, as the first fruit of His atonement. Coming to His Apostles after His resurrection He said to them: "Peace be to you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them."

These words clearly express the power conferred on His priesthood to forgive sins in His name; and it was thus that the Church at all times understood her divine commission, as St. Paul tells us:—"To us is given the ministry of reconciliation."

The Sacrament of Penance assures the virtue of repentance by raising our penitential acts to the moral and supernatural value of Christ's atoning merits, which are applied to our souls in this sacrament. The requisite penitential acts by which we concur with the sacramental grace of pardon are, confession, contrition and satisfaction. These acts being verified, the priests' absolution takes away our sins in the name and power of Christ our Saviour.

The obligation of confessing our sins is implied in the grant of Christ to His priesthood of the power to forgive. The priest

cannot rationally nor reverently exercise this holy power upon what has not been submitted to his judgment. The appointed Judge of Consciences, he must hear the cause or he cannot pronounce sentence. Naturally all reconciliation by way of pardon supposes the avowal of the fault. So just an action on the part of every sincere penitent was the subject of the earliest divine legislation, and the practice was still in vogue among the Hebrews in the days of John the Baptist. The teaching and practice of all Christian ages stand for confession.

As in the use of the Sacraments there is question of the reverent treatment of the Precious Blood of Christ, from which they derive their grace, so in this sacrament it is required that our penitential acts be sincere. Confession should be sincere, that is, a full avowal of all our mortal sins in their nature and number. Sins differ in their nature according to the commandment or the virtue transgressed, and they increase in number—of course—by repetition. Hence, to be sincere, our confession should mention each different mortal sin in its precise nature, and must state, as far as possible, the exact number of times it was committed. To secure this complete confession a serious examination of conscience should be made, especially if confession is made at long intervals or annually only. Exactness is required as to the number of times the mortal sin was committed. Hence, such careless expression as—"Sometimes," or "Often," or "Frequently," or "Several Times." etc., will not do; and if that is the way anyone knowingly and deliberately and without a compelling cause, moral or physical, confesses his mortal sins, let him understand that such confessions are insincere.

To be sincere, our confession must be contrite. Contrition, perfect or imperfect, is a hearty sorrow for our sins as offenses against God, with a firm purpose to commit the sin no more. We should deplore and detest our mortal sins, as the greatest of all

evils, by an interior, supernatural, universal and sovereign sorrow;—by a complete reversion from the sins and conversion to God;—by a complete change of heart. "If the sinner will turn from his wickedness and do penance for his sin, saith the Lord, I will remember his iniquities no more. . . . Be converted to me in mourning and weeping,—rend your hearts and not your garments." Those who frequently confess, and yet have nothing to mention but their daily imperfections, should be careful to have contrition in their confessions, and should, therefore, mention some sin of the past life for which they entertain the requisite contrition.

A further requirement of this Sacrament is the will to make satisfaction, that is, to do penance for our sins. The priest's absolution does not abolish all the penalty due to us for our sins. When our mortal sins, contritely confessed, are forgiven, the eternal punishment that was due to us for them is taken away; but not the debt of temporal punishment. The Prophet, on the part of God, declared to the penitent David that his sin was forgiven, but added: "The sword shall never depart from thy house." Hence, in this Sacrament a penance is imposed on us to admonish and aid us in the duty and work of reparation;—a reparation which must be made either here or in the more intolerable pains of Purgatory.

On the sinner's full and contrite confession, with his disposition to make satisfaction, descends the priests' absolution,—the pardon conveyed to him from the Son of God; an instantaneous and universal forgiveness, blotting out all his sins and restoring him to sanctifying grace, and reviving for him all the merit of past good works or patient sufferings done or endured when he was in the state of grace. For God has made a pact with His friends whereby all their labor and afflictions shall be meritorious of an eternal reward.

Like annual communion, the yearly confession enjoined on us—for mortal sin especially—is by no means supposed or calculated, ordinarily, to suffice for the Christian life. The precepts of the Church are as by-laws made to enforce the Christian constitution or Gospel of Christ. But the Gospel of Christ demands of us to live and abide in the state of grace; and, therefore, amid the temptations of life we must make frequent use of this healing Sacrament in order to maintain the life of divine grace in our souls. Whoever, therefore, knowing his constant danger and his frequent falls, is satisfied with annual confession knows well that he is not observing the law of the Gospel;—not mastering his passions;—not living a truly practical Christian life, and not making a reasonable effort to save his soul.

How mild and considerate are the divine conditions for our reconciliation with God! Secret confession to the Church—to the Holy Ghost in the Church; to the priest of Christ,—to a brother, to one tried in all things as ourselves, and who by his calling and knowledge is filled with sympathy. Being the appointed delegate of the Son of God, when we kneel before him in confession we are kneeling at the feet of our merciful Saviour Himself. And what a contrast is this to the future terrible revelation of unpardoned sin that is to be made before the assembled world on that dread day when Christ shall appear in majesty to judge all men and pronounce upon the proud and impenitent the awful sentence of eternal damnation!

EASTER SUNDAY

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

"He is risen. Behold the place where they laid him. But go and tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee; there you shall see him, as he told you."—Matt., xvi, 6-7.

When the dead Body of Jesus was taken down from the Cross and placed in the sepulchre it was in the assured possession of His enemies—the public authorities of Jerusalem. It was walled up in the bosom of a rock; the great stone that closed the tomb was further legally secured by the public seal of the Sanhedrim, and the sepulchre was guarded by Roman soldiers whose lives depended on the integrity of that seal and the presence of the Body. These extraordinary precautions were taken because Jesus had said: "I will rise again on the third day;" and while no one believed Him, His enemies remembered, and they intended publicly to disprove His words by removing the seal and opening the tomb after the third day, when they purposed to exhibit His Body in a state of decomposition.

But, notwithstanding the money paid by the authorities to induce the guards to lie concerning what occurred at the sepulchre, Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day. His resurrection is a divine fact testified to by unimpeachable eye-witnesses; it is the foundation of all the preaching of the Apostles; their testimony is corroborated by their miracles and sealed by their virtuous lives and heroic death ; and mankind believed it and by this belief rose suddenly from the universal night of paganism to the spiritual enlightenment, grace, moral life and dignity of the Christian world.

The foundation of Christianity, both historical and doctrinal, is Jesus Christ risen from the dead,—Jesus Christ passing beyond the grave and returning to wrest from death its victory and to pronounce the last divine word of immortality upon the destiny of man. All the Evangelists narrate the resurrection of Jesus as a fact demonstrated many times by His apparition to the Apostles both individually and collectively and to all the disciples during a period of forty days. And all these eye-witnessess were obstinately incredulous on this very point. None of them entertained the idea that the Master would, or could, rise from the dead. On the contrary, they shared the common belief of the time among the Jews that the true Christ was fated not to die. When, therefore, they saw Jesus crucified, dead and buried, all their hope in Him died and was buried with Him.

Yet these are the men who a few days later came forth and boldly preached His resurrection to the Hebrew nation and the Gentile world. It is because they preached what they had seen. Though imprisoned, scourged and threatened with death, they could not be silenced. "We cannot but preach Him whom God raised up from the dead. The God of our fathers hath glorified His son Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied before the face of Pilate, and we are witnesses of His resurrection. . . . For, these things which God hath showed before by the mouth of all the Prophets have been fulfilled in Jesus Crist, that He should suffer and rise again, and that penance and the remission of sins should be preached in His name throughout the world. Repent therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out and you shall receive the Holy Ghost" (Acts, ii).

The testimony of the Apostles was confirmed by the testimony of God in the countless and stupendous miracles which they wrought in the name of Jesus in the sight of all the people; and the immediate supernatural result was the conversion of many

thousands of the Jews who had seen Jesus crucified, and many of the priests who had conspired in His death; so that a numerous Christian Church at once arose in Jerusalem, distinguished by the greatest sanctity and heroism. In those days a fiery zealot of false Judaism,—Saul of Tarsus, obtained authority to persecute the infant Christian Church and went about dragging the Christians to prison and to death. And while on this mission at the head of a cavalcade on the road to Damascus, the risen Christ appeared to Him in majesty and flung him from his horse into the dust. And it is this great Hebrew convert—St. Paul, who writes: "I make known the Gospel of Salvation,—that Christ died for our sins and rose again for our sanctification the third day. And that He was seen by Peter, and after by the eleven; then was He seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain at this day. After that He was seen by James, and then by all the Apostles. And last of all He was seen by me. . . . And this I declare, that, if Christ be not risen from the dead, there is no resurrection of any man, but death eternal is the doom of all mankind, and our preaching is vain, and your faith is vain, and you are yet in your sins." The dead Body of Jesus in the tomb, though separated from the soul, was substantially united to the Eternal Word, and could not corrupt; and, as He had foretold, on the third day in the early morning dawn Jesus, by His own almighty power, took up again His human life, and, endowing His reanimated Body with the qualities of immortality, came forth from the sepulchre without touching the seal or stone, and departed unperceived, leaving His enemies to guard an empty grave. An hour later, as the sun appeared above the horizon, the angel of the Lord descended in splendor from heaven; struck away the useless tomb-stone, and sat waiting the holy women—the friends of the Crucified One.

Divine author and model of human salvation, Jesus points us

the way to present blessedness and future eternal happiness. As head of redeemed humanity He said: "Ought not Christ to suffer these things and so enter into His Glory." It is the first lesson of our moral life;—self-restraint and self-abasement before God are for us, sinners, the condition of our restoration to the divine sonship; and nothing could be more gracious and loving in its condescension than the example of the Incarnate Son of God submitting to the shame and sorrows of the Cross and rising therefrom to eternal glory to give us the inspiration and grace to restrain our passions and to endure our trials, and by Sacramental Union with Him, to live in the assured and blessed hope of our final and endless glorification.

LOW SUNDAY

THE OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH DAY

"And after eight days again, his disciples were within . . . and Jesus cometh and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you."—John, xx, 26.

After His resurrection on Easter Sunday, our Lord appeared to His assembled disciples on the successive Sundays during a space of forty days; and the earliest Christian records in the Scriptures and primitive Tradition of the Church show that the Faithful were accustomed to assemble for divine worship on the first day of the week—Sunday, which they entitled the "Lord's Day." This calls our attention to the duty of religiously observing the Sabbath, or Sunday.

We owe to God the homage of our entire being—interior faith and love, and external observance and service; for, God is the author of our bodies as well of our souls, and it is by external acts that the interior sentiments of the mind are expressed and fostered. A religion purely interior, or of the mind only, is a vain conceit imagined by the pride of those who are unwilling to bear the yoke of God's service.

The external and public worship of God was the subject of the earliest divine legislation. For the Hebrew people God prescribed the Seventh day of the week, or Saturday, as the day of public worship, to keep them in mind of His work of creation and of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. For, this people were prone to idolatry, and hence the Lord based their religious worship on the natural religious truth that all nature is the work of the one, only, and Eternal Spirit, God, the Almighty; and therefore He thundered to them from Sinai: "Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath Day." For in six days

the Lord God made the heavens and the earth, and He rested on the seventh day, and commanded it should be a day of rest and sanctification unto the Lord. The proximate motive of this legislation, as far as it determined this particular day of the week, was to correct the Hebrew tendency to idolatry and to direct the minds of that people to their need of a moral and spiritual liberator—a Redeemer who was to free them from sin. Hence their Sabbath was of the natural and temporary order, and was figurative and promissory of the spiritual and supernatural realities to come in the Person and institutions of the Messias.

Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, fulfilled and abolished all Judaic religious forms and days of worship by His atonement on the Cross, and His resurrection on the first day of the week from the dead. The law of public worship, therefore, is adequately and sublimely fulfilled in the Church of Christ by devout attendance at the adorable Sacrifice which our Lord instituted as the perpetual memorial of His sacrifice on the Cross—the Holy Mass. There the all-holy victim—Jesus Himself—is offered up by the hands of His priesthood, to the infinite honor of the Blessed Trinity and the spiritual benefit of the attending Faithful. It was this sublime worship which the last of the Hebrew prophets, Malachy, beheld when he announced to his astonished nation the approaching end of their covenant with its figurative form of worship, and said: "Thus saith the Lord; let your victims cease. I have no longer any pleasure in the gifts of your hands. For my name is great among the Gentiles, and from the rising of the sun till the going down there is offered up in my name a clean oblation, and my name is great among the Gentiles saith the Lord God of hosts" (Mal. I. 10-11). In this prophetic vision Malachy followed the track of the sun in its course from the orient to its sinking in the far western wave, and beheld it

shining down successively upon the lighted altars of the assembled nations of the Christian world at Holy Mass on Sunday.

An essential part of the law of public worship is the duty of resting from servile work, that is, from all bodily labor not of a pressing necessity nor required by the higher law of charity—from all work which, by its nature or duration, is calculated to fatigue the body and thereby incapacitate the mind for the spiritual activities of the Sacred Day.

Besides the right of God to our devout attendance on His service, the personal and social benefits of the law of the weekly day of rest are of incalculable value to us. By this law we command the necessary leisure and forces for our religious activity; we have the opportunity to lift our care-worn souls above worldly pursuits and to assert our higher needs and destiny; we obtain, through associated prayer and canticle, the moral strength and religious consolation our souls require; we secure among us the preservation of God's revealed truth; our faith is enlightened and deepened by conference and instruction; while our Christian liberty is maintained against the industrial slavery that menaces us from the greedy commercialism that knows no rest, and that takes no thought of the claims of God or the spiritual needs and rights of man.

Our being, our faculties, our means, our health and our time are the gifts of our Creator; and therefore, gratitude, at least, demands of us the open and public manifestation, in aggregate meeting, of our sense of indebtedness to God and of our dependence upon HIM. Out of the seven days of the week He has appointed us six days in which to pursue our temporal affairs, and He demands only one day of public recognition and homage —not that He needs us, but we, indeed, need Him—and that one day, the immortal first day of the week on which our Saviour

achieved the crowning glory of our redemption by His triumphant resurrection from the dead.

The infinite Majesty and goodness of Our God; the sacred grandeur of the Mass, and the dignity investing us from the possession of so divine a worship should win from us a prompt and cheerful observance of Sunday; and should associate us around the altar of God in emulation of the happy spirits of light and love who gaze in adoring rapture on the inveiled face of the Divine Christ whom we offer up there, and who fly to do His bidding with the swiftness and ardor of flames of fire. And if the hope of reward attracts us, let us remember that we are called to serve an infinitely rich and generous God, who has pledged His word to minister in Heaven to the eternal happiness of all who will love and serve Him.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

"I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But the hireling whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and flieth."—John, x, 11.

The title of universal shepherd, expressive of His most amiable relation to men, was given to the promised Messias by the inspired prophets; and Jesus applies this prophetic title to Himself in declaring His relation to the Church, and, through her, to every soul that will follow and obey Him. He cited the Prophet Ezechiel (xxx, 11) in testimony of His Messiahship and His office—"Thus saith the Lord, Behold I myself will seek my sheep and I will visit them. As the shepherd visiteth his flock in the day when He shall be in the midst of his sheep that were scattered, so will I visit my sheep; and I will set up one

shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, and shall be their shepherd, and I, the Lord, will be their God." In harmony with this prediction Christ declared His office of Supreme Shepherd of both the Chosen People and the Gentile world and He said: "I am come to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel. . . . And other sheep I have that are not of this fold—them also must I bring in and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."

The full and peaceful exercise of His office as the shepherd of souls is verified in the Church, which is the visible and perpetual fold of His divine truth and grace, and is guided by Him through His appointed witnesses and representatives as originally instituted by Him; and over which He constituted Peter as His Chief Vicar, commanding him thrice to rule His fold, saying: "Feed my lambs and my sheep." This supreme Vicariate Peter exercised in the infant Church, charging bishops to "feed the flock of God which is among you, and when the Prince of pastors shall appear you shall receive a never-failing crown of glory"; and the successors of St. Peter in his Episcopate have ever exercised this office.

Thus constituted by Christ, the true fold is maintained in unity. Every member is in constant and active communication with Christ, through a divinely-organized subordination; the Faithful in submission to the Clergy; the Clergy in submission to the Episcopate, and the Episcopate in submission to the Papacy; and thus the prediction of the prophets and the words of Christ are verified: "One fold and one Shepherd," one faith, one law, one worship and one government in which the enlightened and obedient flock of Christ is led by the true Shepherd to the wholesome pastures of divine truth and grace. This is the description and true condition of the Catholic Church throughout all nations and in all ages—the indestructible fold of Christ.

But, as Jesus warned us, there are false shepherds—the hirelings, who usurp the name and functions of the Shepherd, and who are neither of the fold of Christ nor have received any mission from Him through His Church; but who, despising obedience and discipline, come to scatter and destroy the flock by undermining the faith and betraying souls to the wolves of unbelief. These lead their deluded followers into the barren desert of religious error and spiritual destitution. It is the history of Protestantism, from whose heresies the good Shepherd has signally protected His Church during the past three centuries. Jesus is, indeed, the good Shepherd of our souls. He came from the height of Heaven to seek us. He clothed Himself with our nature to win our confidence and love, and He died that we might live. He has brought us into His fold and nourished us with His infallible word of truth and His Sacramental Grace. He has followed us in mercy on all the tortuous and thorny paths of our sinful wanderings, and brought us back pardoned and saved from perishing eternally.

Goodness and Mercy are His attributes; and these He joyfully exerted to rid men from the one terrible evil that afflicts mankind, that is sin. Esteeming us all as His brethren and the adopted children of His Father, His heart was full of pity and sympathy for sinners; and to win them to repentance He walked among them; preached forgiveness to them; healed them; ate with them, and defended them against the Pharisees. To these latter he said: "Understand this, that I will have mercy rather than worship" . . . And, "There is more joy in Heaven over one sinner doing penance than over ninety-nine Just who need not penance." He delivered the touching parables of the Lost Sheep and of the Prodigal Son, and He protected and pardoned the adulterous woman against her accusers and the penalties of the Mosaic law.

On His last approach to Jerusalem, where His enemies had determined on His death, Jesus, foreseeing the fate that was to light upon the apostate city, wept over it, and, with divine tenderness, He said: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, but thou wouldst not." And, after His resurrection, His first act on appearing to His Apostles was to confer on them His own Almighty power to remit sins; and He said to them, "Peace be to you; receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them."

Our plain duty, therefore, is, to revere and adore our Divine Shepherd; to leave sin, and confide in His goodness and mercy; to be grateful to Him for all His care of us; to love Him for His infinite love; to follow the inspiration of His Spirit and to abide in His fold by obedience to His accredited witness and guide, the Church. Doing this we shall stray no more; and the good work which Jesus has begun in us will be perfected, and we shall be securely led by Him through all the dangers and trials of this life into the eternal fold among the blessed of His Father.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

HEAVEN

"I shall see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you."—John, xvi, 22.

In His last discourse, on the eve of His Passion, Jesus comforts His Apostles for His approaching departure from this mortal life and for the trials and persecution they must meet with in their divine mission to the world. The joy He promised them was, in great part, soon fulfilled by His apparitions to them after His resurrection and by the glorious sight of His ascension to

Heaven; and their joy carried them victoriously through all the opposition of the world.

For us, also, Jesus is the source of true and adequate joy—He is the way to present blessedness and to eternal happiness. Without Him we should never know nor attain to the purpose of our existence, but must ever be a puzzle to ourselves and a failure.

We are impelled by the desire of a perfect happiness; a spiritual and everlasting joy; yet not all that our earthly life affords can give us this happiness; for the principles of the happiness that is to satisfy the spiritual and immortal soul made to the image and likeness of God cannot be material nor human, but must be divine.

Much depends on our certainty as to the character of our final destiny. The future happiness popularly conceived by the non-Catholic mind—a corruption of the Christian heaven—fails to attract the human heart, because it is devoid of the divine element; and where it has not done immense positive harm to souls by lowering the Christian ideal, it has been hardly of any greater moral worth than the "Elysium" of the pagans or the "Happy Hunting Ground" of the Indian. Unspiritual and un-Christian in its concept, it is, at best, a mere state of repose from present labors or of freedom from present ills, with some social comforts transferred from earthly conditions; but involving no moral aptitude of the soul for union with God, and no objective presence of Deity to call forth the spiritual activities of the soul. Such a heaven cannot answer the Divine purpose of the Christian Religion, nor hold the will of fallen man to moral duty, to spiritual endeavor, or to patient endurance amid the evil seductions, the formidable obstacles and the overwhelming trials of our earthly life.

The truth is, that, by a supernatural elevation of our being

and by a divine vocation we are inspired and instructed to seek, not a man-made heaven, but, above and beyond all created beatitude, God Himself, and God alone—a beatitude which corresponds to the beatitude of Christ—the model and author of our salvation. Heaven, as God designs it for us, is constituted by the very being of the Incarnate Son of God. It is the immediate union of our humanity, in Christ, with the Eternal God and the vision of God's face and His full possession. The divine beatitude the Humanity of Christ possessed from the first instant of His conception—in Him was Heaven.

Among the first words which Jesus uttered to the world the true character of future happiness was revealed when He said: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God. . . . They shall be as the Angels who see the face of God in Heaven." Jesus commissioned His apostles to bear this message to mankind; and thus they taught: "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what joy God hath reserved for those that love Him. . . . Now we see only in part and darkly, but then we shall see Him face to face. . . . And when He shall appear we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is. . . . And we beholding the glory of God with unveiled face, shall be transformed into the same image. . . . And for this end God, who commanded the light to shine upon the world, hath shined in our hearts by the faith revealed to us in Christ Jesus. . . . Every one, therefore, that hath this hope in him sanctifieth himself even as He is holy."

This divine destiny is seen in the fundamental gifts of the Christian life—divine faith and grace. St. Peter teaches us that these most precious gifts make us, here, partakers of the Divine Nature and enable us to walk in love "till the day shall dawn, and all shadows pass away," and the light of God's face shall

illumine and gladden our hearts. Divine faith and sanctifying grace have God for their immediate object and their ultimate end. Faith is essentially intuitive, and must be consummated in vision. Grace is essentially unitive, and must be consummated in union and possession—the vision of God and the possession of God—this is the Christian heaven.

Having passed through this life of probation and departed in the faith and grace of Christ, the faithful soul, made perfect in love, is at last called by its loving Creator to the eternal nuptials, and is conducted by His angels to the realms of eternal life. There the light of divine glory floods the soul, elevating and defying it, and thus enabling it to look upon God. That look seals its divine happiness forever; for it looks upon the Infinite Majesty, Goodness, Beauty and Love—the Eternal fountain of being, life and perfection; and the very Joy of God becomes the eternal life of the soul. It is the Beatific Vision, which Christ enjoyed and which He pledged to all His faithful followers.

And as the soul of the faithful Christian thus attains to God, the body also shall finally share in its divine joy and glory. Jesus said: "The day shall come when all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life eternal." Hence, the body of the faithful one, reunited to the soul, will be endowed with immortal beatitude and splendor like to the glory and beauty of the Body of Christ.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

THE HOLY GHOST

"But I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you."—John, xvi, 7.

While the Three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity act together in the external operations of God, yet we rightly attribute to the Holy Ghost the office of fostering and bringing to perfection the works of the Father and the Son; and in this the Holy Ghost is specially manifested to the world. It was therefore expedient to the Church of Christ represented in His Apostles that Jesus, at the close of His mortal life, should withdraw His visible presence and leave her under the perfecting care of the Holy Ghost, who was to infuse into her a new and perfect spiritual life. A great crisis was approaching for those imperfect and timid apostles—poor fishermen—who were so dependent on the visible presence of the Master. After His ascension to Heaven they had to face the Hebrew and Gentile world and preach the Gospel of Christ amid universal opposition and to seal their teaching with their blood. For this they needed the special illumining, strengthening and consoling influence of the Divine Spirit of truth and love and His infallible guidance in opposing and correcting the errors and vices of the nations. The event in the Cenacle on Pentecost day was the fulfilment of Christ's promise to send upon them the Holy Ghost, and from thence they went forth with a divine and irresistible moral energy and achieved the religious conquest of the world. The Holy Ghost, ever since that day, is the author and holder of all power in the Church; He is the cause of her unity among all races and in all ages and the source of her infallibility and indestructibility.

It is thus that He cherishes and guides the work of Jesus and bears testimony to His Divinity, as Jesus said: "He shall give testimony of me." We say in the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the Holy Ghost," that is, that He is God and the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. He is the infinite, personified love of the Father and the Son, proceeding eternally from them as their common spirit in the identity of one and the same Divine Nature.

The action of the Holy Ghost upon Creation and upon the destinies of mankind is recorded in both Testaments of Divine Revelation. It was He who brought the earth out of its primitive chaos into a habitable world of order, beauty and life. He breathed the spiritual and immortal soul into the lifeless clay of the first man and sanctified our first parents by the gift of divine grace. After our fall from original justice He inspired the patriarchs and prophets with the message of a promised Redeemer and kept alive through the ages the hope and expectation of the Messias. It was the Holy Ghost, who by the fullness of grace, prepared the Immaculate Virgin Mary to be the worthy Mother of the Incarnate Son of God and wrought the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation in her virginal womb. At the baptism of Jesus the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove resting upon Him and revealing Him as the Messias; and when Jesus was transfigured in glory on Mount Thabor the Holy Ghost, in the form of a bright cloud, supported Him above the earth while the voice of the Father was heard saying: "This is my Beloved Son, hear ye Him."

The Divine Spirit in taking possession of the Church of Christ filled her with His marvellous spiritual gifts; and what He did for the Church, as Christ's accredited witness, He does, in proportionate measure, for every member who lives her life of divine grace. He adorns the soul with His seven gifts or

supernatural powers of divine life as so many titles to eternal happiness. The gift of Wisdom, by which He enables us to judge correctly, as God judges, between temporal and eternal things, and, with a relish for things divine and a corresponding contempt for the earthly and perishable, to make the wise choice that will secure our eternal salvation. The gift of Understanding, by which He enables us to distinguish truth from error and to cling to the Faith—to know God in His sublime perfections and His adorable mysteries, and to recognize His Providence in all the events of life. The gift of Counsel, by which He enables us prudently to consult the divine law in all our undertakings and to act with the cautious view of God's will and our own eternal interests. The gift of Fortitude, by which He enables us to go forward bravely, to resist our enemies strongly and to bear all ills patiently, having our eyes fixed on the high and eternal reward of victory. The gift of Knowledge, by which He enables us to see beneath the outward deceptive show of creatures and to read their true nature as vain and fragile—incapable of making us happy, and dangerous to our salvation. The gift of Piety, by which He enables us to venerate the divine law and to love justice and duty; to love and honor God as our Father and to place all our happiness in pleasing and serving Him. The gift of the Fear of the Lord, by which He enables us to maintain our souls in a holy and filial dread of offending the Infinite Goodness—the fear—born of love—of an affectionate child toward the Best and Dearest of Fathers,—the fear which creates in us a horror of sin and inspires us to have instant and confident recourse to God in all our temptations. The Holy Ghost infuses these glorious spiritual habits into the soul in Baptism; perfects them in Confirmation and Holy Orders, and, when lost by sin, restores them to us in the Sacrament of Penance. Thus it is that the Holy Ghost makes

us indeed the sons of God, possessing the spirit of Jesus,—made like unto Him as His brethren and having the God-given right to call the Almighty our Father. "For they who are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. . . . And because you are sons, God hath sent the spirit of His Son into our hearts whereby we cry: "Abba—Father" (Rom. viii, 15).

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

PRAYER

"Amen, amen, I say to you; if you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it to you."—John, xvi, 23.

Prayer is the raising up of our mind to God in adoration, praise, propitiation and petition—four religious acts which are founded on our moral relation to God as His rational creatures and which are the just expression of our sense of the infinite worthiness of the Divine Majesty; of His supreme dominion over us; of our amenableness to His Justice and of our dependence on Him for the blessings of our temporal and eternal life. Right reason enjoins these acts; and therefore the man who refuses to pray denies thereby the rights of God, belies his own condition as God's rational creature, and excludes himself from the Divine plan of mercy and bounty both for this life and for the next.

Besides the natural law of our rational being, the revealed divine law also imposes on us the duty of prayer as an act of filial piety towards God. By our baptism we are the brethren of the Incarnate Son of God and the adopted children of His Eternal Father; and, therefore, on this our higher, supernatural relationship to God, rest the special duty and privilege of honoring and entreating Him as our Father. And in petitioning the Father of Goodness and Mercy we should do so in the name of Christ; for He is our Mediator, and our prayer derives its efficacy only from His infinite merits as the Eternal Son of God Incarnate. "Whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it to you."

In commanding us to pray always—habitually, He insisted, in the most striking language, on our duty of absolute confidence in

the willingness of the Father to grant our petitions when offered up in His name, that is, in faith and trust in Him as the Incarnate Son of God, and when asking for blessings which are in no way detrimental to His work and purpose in our true interests and behalf—our eternal salvation. Granted faith and love, or, at least, a sincere desire to obey God—which is a turning away from sin, every earnest prayer will, on the promise of the Son of God, be answered. While we cannot always be sure that we know what is best for us in the temporal order, nor should we lay down conditions for God as to the time and quality of His answer, yet every true prayer is answered in the way that God sees best for us. If our prayer is not answered in the way we desire, it is because what we ask is not a true good, but only an apparent one and would be for us a real evil; but our prayer is answered in a truer and better way. For God, who ever fulfils the desires of those who love Him, often refuses the object of our petition, but always answers the prayer with something more helpful to our final beatitude. As St. Augustine says: "God's goodness is evident in granting to our earnest prayer, not always what we willed, but what we should have preferred." Often also God delays His answer until we have formed the habit of fervent prayer, and then He showers His blessings upon us.

To inspire us all to be instant and confiding in prayer, Jesus narrated this parable: "There was a Judge in a certain city, who feared not God, nor regarded man. And there was a certain widow in that city, and she came to him saying: Avenge me of my adversary. And he would not for a long time. But afterwards he said within himself: Although I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow is troublesome to me and lest continually coming she weary me, I will avenge her. Hear what the unjust Judge saith! And I say unto you: Ask and

you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you."

Prayer is necessary to preserve the supernatural life in our souls. The principles of the supernatural life in us are, divine faith and sanctifying grace; but these gifts of God are exercised, developed and perfected by communion with their source and object—God. Without this communion, therefore, without prayer, they will decline and die. Again, our spiritual life is beset with many dangers, which cannot be guarded against nor escaped except by prayer. Temptations are allowed by Providence to assail us in order that by victory our supernatural life may be solidly established and perfected; but to neglect prayer is to throw down our arms and allow ourselves to be taken captive by the enemy. The self-confidence of St. Peter led him, against the warning of Jesus, to neglect prayer, and, in the hour of temptation, he denied the Lord! God is ever ready to help us by His grace if we will turn to Him by prayer—as it is our serious duty to do—in the time of temptation. In every temptation—if the occasion be not of our own seeking—we may obtain by prayer the grace to stand firm in the fear and love of God and to trample under foot the enemies of our salvation. Let us be thoroughly convinced of the duty and necessity of habitual and fervent prayer—of habitually and fervently adoring God; rendering Him thanks for His many blessings; propitiating Him for our many sins, and imploring His aid and comfort in all our dangers and trials.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

CONFIDENCE IN GOD

"These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized."—John, xvi, 1.

The expression, *to be scandalized* means here, as in many other passages of the Scriptures, to fail in confidence towards God—to lose hope in Him.

Confidence in God is an essential virtue of the Christian state and character, and is therefore infused into our souls in Baptism as the gift of divine hope together with divine faith and charity. By this supernatural gift of hope we confide in God and firmly expect that if we fulfil the conditions He requires of us He will give us His grace and bring us to everlasting happiness according to His promise. Hope in God is commanded of us as a homage due to Him and as the safeguard of our Christian life and the surety of our final salvation. It is founded on faith—on the knowledge of God, of His power, His goodness, His love and His promises, which are made known to us by the Incarnate Son of God. Established on Christian faith, the virtue of hope enables us to stand true to God and to possess our souls in peace amid the trials and the seductions of this world—firmly attached to God as by the "anchor of the soul," as St. Paul calls it. While as Christians, therefore, we should be distinguished by the divine habit of hope in God, the exercise of this noble virtue is especially required of us in all emergencies of life, as when doubt and temptation assail us; when trouble and suffering come upon us; when we are about to receive the Holy Sacraments, and when we are at the point of death. The thought of our sins should not be allowed to make us distrust God, but on the contrary; for if we sincerely abandon sin and its occasions and have recourse to God, we have the strongest grounds for a

true and most solid hope; for we thus fulfil the conditions required by God for mercy and salvation, and this good work is already begun in us by His grace. We must, therefore, rely on God's fatherly providence and on the infinite merits of His Incarnate Son, who died for us on the Cross. Jesus is our God—the Eternal Word made flesh for us—Infinite Power, Goodness and Mercy Incarnate for our salvation! St. Jerome asks us to take notice that in the human genealogy of our Divine Redeemer, not all who are mentioned as His human ancestors were holy people, but many are named whom the Scriptures reprehend; and this was to teach us that He, who came to save sinners, willed to descend from sinners and so to take away the sins of all. In Heaven, as in His Church on earth, Jesus continues for each of us the work of our salvation—"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just, who is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but of the whole world."

Hence the comprehensive and sublime formula which the Church puts into our mouths: "O my God, relying on Thy infinite goodness and promises, I hope to obtain pardon for my sins, grace to serve Thee, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer."

Christian hope in God is endangered by two sinful extremes—despair and presumption. While forgetfulness of God's benefits to us and a lack of devotion are the common causes of a want of lively hope among careless Christians, positive despair arises most commonly from the deadly vices of spiritual sloth and of lust. Our salvation—the supreme and everlasting happiness promised us by God, is a spiritual good which, though difficult of attainment, can be most certainly secured by our co-operation with God's grace; but the victim of sloth and lust is precisely opposed to a spiritual good, especially if it requires effort, and, confiding only in himself and experiencing his own moral de-

ficiency, he assumes that, for him, grace, virtue and salvation are unattainable; and he therefore gives up the cause of God and of his soul. This is despair—a most dreadful sin, because by it the sinner distrusts even God; he equivalently denies the Infinite Power and Goodness; he impugns God's fidelity to His promises and gainsays the efficacy of Christ's all-atoning death.

We are a fallen race, and, most certainly, without God's grace we cannot live virtuously, nor save our souls—"Without me ye can do nothing." But if, distrusting ourselves and avoiding the proximate occasions of sin, we have recourse to God in humble confidence, there is not one among us who may not speedily rise victorious over the most inveterate habit of sin and eventually attain to eternal salvation. God's pity and mercy are especially extended to him who struggles against his weakness while trusting in Him.

The other sinful extreme opposed to Christian hope in God is presumption—the purpose to go on grievously sinning for the reason that God is merciful, and the expecting of pardon without repentance and of salvation without good works. This mortal sin of presumption, arising from pride, abuses God's forbearance; mocks at His Justice, and blasphemes against the Holy Ghost, whose special office it is to withdraw us from sin. And this is a most dangerous sin, because, while God is truly merciful and is ready to pardon every penitent sinner, and gives his grace to the tempted who fear and shun temptation and seek His aid, yet for those who thus deride the dearest of His Attributes—His Mercy, He reserves His vengeance—"Thou, O Lord, humblest those who presume. . . . The hope of the ungodly shall perish."

Let us cultivate a firm and lively confidence in God by the constant memory of His goodness and His promises, and let us daily make acts of hope in Him, that this virtue may become more

pronounced in our lives—that it may become in us a well-developed power to sustain us in all our difficulties, temptations and trials, and so enable us to run on cheerfully in the glorious way of our Salvation.

PENTECOST SUNDAY

THE HOLY GHOST IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak in divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak."—Acts, ii, 4.

Jesus came, the true Messias and Incarnate Son of God, and fulfilled all the Divine promises and all human hopes. As St. Paul says: "God who spoke in times past to our fathers through the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath constituted the heir of all things, by whom also He made the world." The design of Jesus in gathering around Him a band of intimate disciples and Apostles was to institute and maintain in this world for all time a religious doctrinal society which should carry to all nations the fruits of His Atonement—faith in God and His Incarnate Son and the grace of Salvation which He merited for all men on the Cross.

In organizing this society, which He called His Church and the Kingdom of Heaven, He chose twelve Apostles and seventy-two disciples and gave them their spiritual commission and their powers. Among the Apostles He selected Simon, whom He named *Peter* (a rock), and conferred on him the primacy of order, of jurisdiction and authority over the entire Church, saying: "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And to thee, Peter, I give the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. . . . I have prayed for

thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not; and do thou confirm thy brethren. . . . Feed My lambs and My sheep." And that His true Church might be known in all ages and distinguished from every false and counterfeit religion originated by men, Jesus endowed it with the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost and the visible divine mark of unity. He prayed: "Holy Father, keep them one, that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me."

In obedience to Christ's command, as well as from fear of the Jews, the Apostles, after His ascension, secluded themselves in the cenacle for ten days in prayer and expectation of the promised aid and comfort of His Holy Spirit; when suddenly their divine transformation occurred, as the Holy Ghost, the infinite Spirit of truth and love, came upon them and flooded their souls with divine light and joy; and they came boldly forth, a corporate religious body, a united and fearless Church of God, and, with transcendent wisdom and eloquence, preached in all languages the eternal Gospel of Christ. The unanimity of their testimony and their doctrine, divinely corroborated by their miracles, converted in Jerusalem three thousand on the first day and five thousand more the next day; and so the Church of Christ spread with miraculous rapidity from city to city and from province to province till it soon extended all over the Roman Empire.

The spread and permanence of the Church as Christ constituted it—one, holy, catholic and apostolic—is the work of the Holy Ghost, who took everlasting possession of it in His descent upon the Apostles on Pentecost Day. Humanly speaking, such a religion, such a society, could neither spread nor endure among men; and the advice of Gamaliel to the Jewish leaders was wise: "Let it alone; for if it be of man it will soon come to naught; but if it be of God, then beware lest, in opposing it, you be found fighting against God." The very character of the Church was a hindrance to its spread in a heathen and degenerate world; for it stood for

and demanded of men faith in incomprehensible mysteries humbling to the mind of fallen man, and required men to adopt a moral code which crucified their bad passions. The inferior intellectual caliber of its apostles—men without human learning and prestige—was against its acceptance by the learned and cultured of the pagan world; the heathen religions, everywhere in possession, roused the idolatrous populace against it, and the masters of the world, the Roman emperors, undertook to extinguish it in its own blood as the atheistic enemy of the gods and of the religious polity of the empire. No human institution could survive such opposition; but the Catholic Church triumphed over all the evil forces of earth and hell because the Holy Ghost had taken possession of this institution of Christ to abide with it forever.

The Catholic Church, therefore, is Christ's true and only accredited witness and authoritative teacher of His divine truth in the world; and to-day, as in the past, with the same unanimity and authority, she speaks to mankind on the doctrines of the Christian faith and moral life "according as the Holy Ghost gives her to speak." Whoever, then, knowingly and willingly remains out of communion with the Catholic Church sins against the sovereignty and command of the Incarnate Son of God and against the light and authority of the Eternal Spirit of Truth.

TRINITY SUNDAY

THE BLESSED TRINITY

"Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—Matt., xxviii, 19.

The essence of the Christian religion consists in the knowledge, adoration and love of the Blessed Trinity: One only God in three Divine Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

During the ages preceding the advent of the Incarnate Word, God insisted more emphatically on the truth of His unity because polytheism, with its attendant idolatry, was the universal error of the heathen world and the peculiar attraction of the Hebrew people. Jesus alone clearly revealed to mankind the Blessed Trinity, and He said: "No one knoweth the Father but the Son and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him." And speaking of His Divinity, He said: "He who seeth Me seeth the Father also . . . I and the Father are one . . . I came out from the Father and am come into the world . . . And I leave the world and go to the Father . . . I enter into that glory which was Mine before the world was made . . . And you shall receive the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father . . . I will send Him to you . . . He will give testimony of Me because He shall receive of Mine and will show it to you."

The Supreme Mystery of the Blessed Trinity demands of us faith, that is, its acceptance on the infallible Word of the Son of God who declared it to His infallible and imperishable Church, and who, through her, declares it to the world.

Designed to reveal to us our God as He is and as He would have His children to know Him, the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity is intended to create in us the reverential and hopeful attitude of mind that should characterize our relations to the Deity. Our mind ceases to revere what it has once fully comprehended, and our heart ceases to rest in a good which it has once exhausted. Capable of endless or indefinite progress in light and love, we turn from the limited to the unlimited, in truth and good, and we can never rest satisfied until we attain to that Being, the Infinite Light and Love, who alone can make us happy because He alone is forever beyond our comprehension.

But while we are unable to comprehend the Blessed Trinity we should, as enlightened Christians, be familiar with the Church's

concept and teaching in regard to this Mystery. We believe and profess with the Church one only God in three Divine Persons—one infinitely perfect intellectual Nature, in whom eternally subsist the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; that, while the three Divine Persons, by reason of their eternal processions within the Deity, are related to and distinct from one another, the nature of God is numerically one and the same in each Person. The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God—one and the same God.

While throughout all creation and in all true science and art we recognize the vestiges of the Blessed Trinity, a clearer, though imperfect, image of this mystery is afforded by the human soul. In our soul there are necessarily two acts of its intellectual life—understanding and volition. In the act of understanding there proceeds within our mind our interior concept or intellectual word, which is the mental expression of the object we understand; and, the more perfect this mental word is, the more is it one with our mind; in God, whose intellectual activity is infinite and whose simplicity is absolute, His intellectual concept is one and identical with the nature of the Godhead, though it is the distinct, eternal, infinite and therefore personified Word of the Father. Again: in our soul, from our combined acts of intellection and volition there proceeds in us our interior love, uniting the soul with the object loved and completing our intellectual life. These two distinct acts of all intellectual life are necessarily in God and in infinite activity. In Him the terms of these acts must be adequate, and therefore infinite, and therefore distinct Persons; yet identical with the Divine Nature, for there can only be one Infinite Being. The adequate term of the Father's intellection is the Eternal Word: God the Son; the adequate term of the Divine volition is the Eternal Love proceeding from the Father and the Son as from a common principle, and this is God the Holy

Ghost, who is the eternal complement of the intellectual life of God.

We should habitually bear in mind the concurrence of the Three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity in the beneficent works of God in our behalf. While the entire Trinity operates in all God's exterior works, yet we attribute the blessings of our creation and our destination to Heaven to the loving-kindness of the Father; our redemption from sin to the loving-kindness of the Son, and our Christian state and sanctification to the loving-kindness of the Holy Ghost. By the grace of adoption we are related to the Blessed Trinity as true members of one family—we are the sons of the Father, the brethren of His Son, and the brides of the Holy Ghost—for the nature of the consummate relationship between the soul and God, to be finally celebrated amid the joys and splendors of heaven, is that of espousals. The charity and fraeternal union that God requires of us in our relations with our fellowmen are modeled for us in the adorable mystery of the Trinity, in which the Father dwells in the Son; the Son in the Father; the Holy Ghost in the Father and the Son, and the Father and the Son in the Holy Ghost—a union which constitutes the infinite happiness of God.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

"A certain man made a great supper and invited many."—Luke, xiv, 16.

Under the ancient covenant Christ's atonement for sin and His plan of human sanctification through our communion with Him were prefigured by the immolation of the Paschal Lamb and the oblation in bread and wine offered up by Melchisedech, "who blessed Abraham and received tithes from him because he was the priest of the Most High God" and typified Christ, unto whom the Father said through the Royal Prophet: "Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech."

Jesus fulfilled these prophetic types in Himself, the former on the Cross and the latter by instituting the Holy Eucharist—the Sacrament which, under the outward forms and appearances of the consecrated bread and wine, contains His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, and is the Memorial Sacrament of His redeeming death on the Cross. Between the Sacrifice of the Cross and that of the Holy Eucharist the difference is only in the manner of offering. The Divine Victim is the same in both. That of the Cross was bloody and painful, and was consummated by the death of Jesus; that of the Eucharist is unbloody and glorious, and the death of the living Jesus, present in the Sacrament, is only mystically, yet strikingly, enacted by the separate consecration of the bread and wine, in repetition of the words and actions of the Son of God and in obedience to His mandate when He instituted this Divine Sacrifice and said to His Apostles: "This do ye for the commemoration of Me—and show forth the death of your Lord until He comes."

It was on the memorable occasion of the miraculous multiplication of the loaves to feed five thousand people in the wilderness

that Jesus promised the Holy Eucharist and insisted on its reception as the condition for maintaining in our souls the Divine life of His Grace; and He fulfilled this promise at the Last Supper. Assembled with His Apostles on the night in which He was betrayed He there executed His last loving will and testament in behalf of mankind, calling it the "New and Everlasting Covenant." Taking bread into His sacred and venerable hands, and giving thanks, and blessing, He broke and gave to them saying: "Take ye and eat, for this is My body, which shall be delivered up for you." Then taking the chalice of wine, and giving thanks, and blessing, He gave to them saying: "Drink ye all of this, for this is the Chalice of the New Testament in My blood, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins. These things do ye for the commemoration of me."

In recording the institution of this adorable Sacrament, the Apostles and Evangelists call it a *mystery of faith;* for it is by the gift of divine faith that we, together with them and the Holy Catholic Church, their successor, accept the truth of Christ's real presence in the Holy Eucharist. His words were truthful and creative, and they effected what they declared; hence, by virtue of His words, the substance of the bread and wine was changed into the substance of His Body and Blood, while the outward forms and appearances of the bread and wine remained the same, being supported in existence by the power of Christ in order to serve at once as a veil to His Glorified Humanity and as a sign to us that He is the food and nourishment of the life of grace in our souls. Thus did Jesus, under the symbol of our daily bread, bequeath Himself to His Church for the purposes of Divine worship and Holy Communion; and the Church has ever adored and guarded this infinite treasure, daily offering Him up to the Blessed Trinity to God's adequate honor and glory and as a propitiation for the living and the dead, and daily inviting her chil-

dren to receive Him with all confidence into pure and fervent hearts. It was this Divine institution which the Prophet beheld when, in his vision of the reign of the Messias on earth, he announced to the Hebrew Nation the approaching end of the ancient covenant so long abused by a degenerate people. Thus saith the Lord by the mouth of Malachy the Prophet: "Let your victims cease. I have no longer any pleasure in the gifts of your hands. For my name is great among the Gentiles, and from the rising of the sun until the going down there is offered in every place in my name a clean oblation, and my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord God of Hosts." The Prophet, by Divine inspiration, spoke thus because he saw, through the centuries, the world-wide Catholic Church of Christ, and, following, in his gaze, the track of the sun, he beheld the million Catholic altars lighted and the Holy Mass begun in every land as the orb of day rose above the horizons of the nations in its luminous course around the globe.

Jesus in the Holy Eucharist is the center of all Christian truth, worship and life. His presence there preserves the Church and the faith. He there fulfils the design of God and the yearning of mankind, as foretold by the prophets, and has become our "Emmanuel"—our "God with us"; thereby confronting us directly with the Divine and eternal order of being, truth and life, and saving us from the blinding allurements and solicitudes of a material condition that would engulf us again in the Godless paganism from which He rescued the world.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE MERCY OF GOD

"I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God over one sinner doing penance."—Luke, xv, 10.

For the intelligent or the rational creature to deliberately spurn the Almighty Creator and set up self and its inordinate desires as its last end and supreme good is a moral enormity which, besides mortally offending God, entails upon the daring creature the most appalling spiritual and physical catastrophe. We see this exemplified in the doom of the fallen angels.

With the natural inflexibility of a purely intellectual nature, unclouded by either ignorance or passion, the angels adhere unchangeably forever to the object of their deliberate judgment and choice, be it good or evil. And thus by only one act of loyal faith in God the good angels sealed their eternal salvation and attained to the supernatural bliss of the vision and possession of God; while by only one act of revolt the rebel angels, preferring their own natural excellence to the proffered supernatural enjoyment of God, sealed their eternal damnation. For these latter thenceforth and forever there can be no repentance and, consequently, no grace and mercy.

But man, much less perfect intellectually, and greatly influenced and clouded in his judgment and choice by appearances and motives of sense, is apt to change his mind and heart, and the sinner may, by accepting grace, change his iniquitous mind and become a saint. Hence the whole account of God's dealings with men is a glorious record of Divine Mercy.

Jesus, the Son of God—infinite goodness incarnate—undertook to atone for our iniquities and to stand surety with the Father for the eternal salvation of all who will repent and turn in confidence to Him. He appreciated the value of our immortal souls

and the glory of the Divine inheritance we had lost, and He gave His life to redeem us from sin and restore us to the Father of Souls. He taught us that we are all called to be His brethren and the adopted sons of His Eternal Father.

He walked by preference, in goodness and kindness, among the sinners and outcasts of the people, and He said: "Come to me all ye that are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. . . . Take my yoke upon you, and you will find rest to your souls. . . . Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee."

The atoning merits of His death for us on the Cross plead triumphantly for Mercy above the cry of our sins for Avenging Justice; for, His flowing blood and His wounds and death are those of God's Beloved Son—the God-Man—and are heard and answered by the Father in every sinner that accepts the grace of repentance and confides in Jesus.

True confidence in the mercy of God precludes both despair and presumption. Despair for our sins amounts to the denial of God's omnipotence and goodness; as if any sins, however numerous and enormous, could exceed the Divine power and willingness to forgive. Satan could not have accomplished the ruin of Judas if that Apostle had not despaired of God's goodness. Peter also sinned grievously—he denied the Son of God; but in his repentance he trusted to the goodness of Jesus, and turned to Him; and the look of compassionate sympathy and forgiveness which he received from the Saviour brought tears of overwhelming tenderness, contrition and gratitude.

On the other hand, it is presumption to continue in sin and go on adding sin to sin, relying on the truth that God is merciful. This is to abuse His mercy and to tempt Him by a daring defiance to His justice. God is truly merciful to them that fear Him. It is also presumption to delay repentance to a self-appointed future time when we vainly expect and falsely hope to

accept the grace of conversion. For, while it is certain that at whatever time during our life here the sinner repents and turns to God, he will obtain mercy—for God has promised it; yet He has not promised to give us the time we have presumed to set down,—He has not promised us to-morrow; and meanwhile such sinner makes his conversion all the more difficult and improbable by becoming daily more hardened in sin, till the habit of sinning becomes a second nature, blinding the judgment and will and creating a moral state approaching to the fatal characteristic of the fallen angels, that is, a changeless determination in evil—which exposes the sinner to an impenitent death. "Let them that fear the Lord hope in Him." It is the mercy of God that urges us to repentance, and the hope that springs from repentance is the pledge of eternal salvation. "I am come," said Jesus, "to save that which was lost." Let the sinner only repent, and have hope in the Son of God. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just, who is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world" (1. John, ii, 1).

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE CHURCH AND EDUCATION

"And Jesus said to him: Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men." —Luke, v, 10.

The Catholic Church is essentially a teaching society. Primarily, she must teach the world the Divine truths of salvation,—the mysteries of the faith—revealed for man's acceptance in the doctrine of Christ, the Incarnate Son of God; and secondarily, she must take cognizance of and pass judgment on all human philosophies as they relate to religion and to the nature and destiny of man. By virtue, therefore, of her office the Catholic

Church seeks the most extended popular enlightenment and the highest intellectual excellence; and her wonderful educational history shows that at the earliest opportunity after the era of persecution had ceased she established free monastic schools all over the Roman Empire. That world-wide pagan sovereignty, for all its unlimited wealth, had afforded no opportunity of enlightenment to the poor and the masses, and the Church assumed the work and carried it on with equal pace with her Divine task of evangelizing the nations.

Thus, Christian schools flourished everywhere from the beginning of the Fourth till the close of the Sixth Century, when began the barbarian inroads, which, in wave after wave of invasion, devastated the empire and overwhelmed its institutions—both pagan and Christian together. Only one country escaped—Christian Ireland, which had long possessed great monastic schools, and, in the common disaster, she threw them open for the free tuition of the many thousands of Europe's youth, who for two centuries flocked to her peaceful shores.

After the barbarians—Huns, Goths and Vandals, had completed the downfall of the Roman Empire and had settled down amid its ruins, the Catholic Church set to work on the task of reconstruction. She had saved from utter loss all that we have of ancient learning and literature, and, while evangelizing the invaders, she took their children and youths and sent them to school to the monks, and eventually created out of chaos the new society of the world—the enlightened, Catholic world, known as Christendom, which united Divine faith with the best elements of classical and philosophical culture. She thus inaugurated the intellectual revival of the Twelfth Century, when arose those famous Catholic universities of Paris, Bologna, Cologne, Louvain, Oxford and Cambridge, and together as many as fifty

renowned universities attested, from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century, the educational genius of the Catholic Church.

Toward the close of this period the printing press flooded the world with the classic works of the ancient philosophers, orators and poets; hundreds of editions of the Bible were issued in the languages of all nations; many works were published on the sciences; the fine arts attained their highest perfection; the New World was discovered; a large measure of popular freedom under constitutional monarchies was secured; labor was organized, emancipated and legally protected, and civilized Europe formed one vast Catholic brotherhood of religion and letters, liberty and progress.

The Catholic Church pursues the only right and safe system of education. In her paramount solicitude for the soul's salvation she has ever asserted the vanity of all intellectual culture which does not aim to perfect men in their most sacred and exalted character—their religious and moral nature, according to the teaching of the Saviour: "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?" The possession of the doctrines of Christ, held with the infallible certainty of Catholic faith, elevates and perfects the mind of the Catholic pupil; sheds its confirming light on the findings of his intelligence in the field of philosophy; gives to his will the moral poise and the sufficient motive of right living; and thus, strengthened against error and the onset of youthful passions, the Church sends him forth an intelligent, honorable and loyal citizen.

The Divinely given mission of the Catholic Church cannot be stayed by the hand of man. Robbed of her educational institutions in several great nations by the so-called Reformation in the Sixteenth Century, and therefore, for a while, placed at a disadvantage in the apostate countries, her indomitable spirit displayed itself in the rise of her great teaching Orders and con-

gregations, which have maintained the cause of Christian education for the past three centuries and which to-day are holding their place in the front rank amid the intellectual forces of the world.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE SIN OF ANGER

"But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment."—Matt., v, 22.

The sin of anger is but too prevalent among Christians in our day. We are very independent and very impulsive. Our pride, our unmortified dispositions, our want of reverent fear of God, and our lack of consideration for our brother make us the easy subjects of the sin of anger; and hence at the slights and injustices offered us we fume and rage and break out into opprobrious language, and are ready to wreak vengeance.

Now, while the offences offered us by our fellow man will always be a source of temptation to us, every command of God is accompanied by His grace, which, if we wait upon Him and seek His aid, will enable us to control our dispositions and to possess our souls in peace under every provocation. Anger is one of the seven Capital Vices or fountain-heads of sin, and when we allow it to sway us to the extent of raging against our fellow man and desiring to wreak serious revenge on him, it is a mortal sin.

Such a state of mind and heart is especially odious to God, as directly opposed to the Divine character and to the benignity and mercy invariably manifested in His dealings with mankind; it is opposed to the natural piety due from us toward our fellow man and to Christian Charity and Justice. Every man is

our brother, and bears within him, as we do, the image and likeness of God; he is called, as we are, to the Divine happiness of the Vision and possession of God; he has been redeemed, as we were, by the Precious Blood of the Son of God, and his error or offense toward us has not deprived him of these titles to our humane and charitable consideration and forbearance.

While some are more disposed to anger than others, the fault for our angry transports must not be laid to our disposition. For we should know that we are in duty bound to mortify and curb our wayward dispositions, and that there is such a virtue required of us as Christian meekness.

We appeal to the teaching and example of the Son of God. In His first sermon to the world Jesus said: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land."—They shall be the tranquil masters of their souls—blessed and consoled in the possession of Divine faith and grace here, and of the undisturbed inheritance of Eternal joy and glory hereafter—yea, "blessed are the meek." And with what moral grandeur Jesus endured the contradiction of the entire Hebrew nation and the insults of His implacable enemies! While He admonished all and denounced the Pharisees in order to save them, He never uttered an angry word; but "When He was reviled He reviled not, but delivered Himself up to them that judged Him unjustly, and was led to the death of the Cross like a lamb to the slaughter, not opening His mouth."

Christian meekness is a virtue which moderates the passion of anger and banishes all rancor, hatred and ill-will from the heart. It is a manly virtue resulting from self-conquest and founded on reverence for God, considerateness for our brother and the sense of indebtedness in the sight of God for our own shortcomings and sins. The moral courage exerted in this virtue does a man the highest honor. It is the enraged and ran-

corous man that is a moral coward. He is enslaved to a self-concentrated pride; his soul is shrunk from the dignity and semblance of a man, and is swayed by the malignant instinct of the savage brute.

Consider the meekness of the Great Church of God. Jesus said to His Church: "I send you into the whole world as sheep among wolves. . . . As they have hated Me, they will hate you; as they have persecuted Me, they will persecute you. If they have called the good man of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household? . . . They will say all manner of things against you unjustly on account of Me; but fear not, I have overcome the world. . . . In your patience you shall possess your souls." And so it was. To its bloody persecution of the early Church the pagan world added the most atrocious calumnies, which the Church, in the spirit of mildness and charity, constantly refuted as they arose, till the enlightened world embraced the hated Christian Religion. And in modern times, again, the world, misled by Protestantism, has used the terrible power of the press to pervert history and heap mountains of calumny upon the Church in order to cover her with odium and to poison the mind of mankind against the masterwork of the wisdom and power of the Son of God. But the Church, led by the Spirit of God and imbued with the meekness of her Divine Founder, is ever tranquil in the face of the world's deluded antagonism, and patiently refutes its calumnies while seeking ways and means of special benevolence and charity to mankind. Now let us look at a saint: St. Francis de Sales was naturally of a hot and hasty temper, but won complete control over his disposition by the Grace of God and the practice of meekness. An apostolic man, by his learning, zeal and gentleness he converted many Calvinists to the true faith. His success so enraged the enemy of souls that, on one occasion, when the Saint

was preaching to a large assembly of the heretics, the devil inspired one of them to go up to the preacher and spit in his face! The Saint, not for an instant disconcerted, quietly wiped his face and proceeded with his discourse as if nothing had happened. But this example of Christian meekness was the means of converting many hundreds of the heretics. "The Lord will guide the mild in judgment, and will teach the meek His ways." "Therefore let all anger and indignation and clamor be put away from you. . . . And be ye kind to one another, merciful and forgiving, even as God hath forgiven you in Christ. . . . And walk in love, as Christ also loved us and delivered Himself for us an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness."

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE LORD'S PRAYER

"I have compassion on the multitude because they continue with me now three days and have not what to eat."—Matt., xv, 32.

As, under Divine Providence, the temporal order is subservient to the spiritual, it is just that we should seek first the spiritual gifts of God—the needs of the higher and Divine life of His revealed truth and sanctifying grace; and while we do this our temporal wants will not be forgotten by Him.

In the spiritual or Divine order of life prayer is absolutely necessary as the expression of our appreciation of its holy gifts and the conditions for our obtaining them. So that, while, in the temporal order, our wants are, of themselves, a touching appeal to God's providence, and are, in the main, satisfied by Him without our deliberate asking, yet, in the spiritual order the Divine gifts of eternal life are not to be obtained without prayer.

Let us briefly analyze the first five petitions of the beautiful prayer composed for us by our Lord. First we are to address God as our Father and say: *"Our Father who art in heaven";* thereby raising our minds and hearts above all earthly cares to the Father of Jesus in Heaven, from whom come all good things for this life and the next. And we say not *my* Father, but *our* Father, because, being incorporated by baptism in Jesus, the Son of God, we are His adopted brethren and the true children of God; and this Divine bond of union and charity among men we acknowledge by this perfect prayer.

Hallowed be Thy Name: The chief desire of an affectionate son is for the honor of his father's name. The name of God stands for His infinite perfections and attributes and for His wonderful and adorable works both in the order of Creation and of our Redemption, and, therefore, for His right to adoration, faith, holy fear, love and obedience from each of us and from all mankind. We mean, therefore: May all irreverence and profanity be far from us, and may God, our All-Holy and Almighty Father, be known, loved and honored among us by all men everywhere and always.

Thy Kingdom Come: It is just and necessary that God should reign supreme in our minds and hearts by His Divine truth and His sanctifying grace. "The Kingdom of God is within you"—it is the peace and joy of God in believing and loving Him. And, to establish the visible reign of the Father in society by His light and love Jesus sent His infallible and imperishable Church, which He also frequently called the "Kingdom of God." It is therefore also for the spread, the freedom and the exaltation of the Church of God that we pray in this petition, and we mean: Let the reign of the Father's truth and grace given us by His Son be established and confirmed in us and in all men—let the one, holy Catholic Religion of the Eternal Father

unite all men in allegiance to Him, and may the dark empire of religious error and revolt vanish before the light and sanctity of His Church.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven: The adorable and beneficent Will of the Father should be submitted to and fulfilled by His rational creatures and adopted children. The dictates of His Will are made known to us in the enlightened conscience; in the message of the Gospel and in the teachings of the Church; and to enable us to do God's will, His all-powerful grace is at hand for all who will seek it. Jesus came to do the Father's will, and He declared that all who obey that Will are dear to Him as "brother, sister and mother." He taught us, moreover, that all earthly afflictions are subject to the Father's knowledge and permission, and are meant for ultimate beatitude. By the petition, therefore, we mean that, renouncing all self-will and sin, we resign ourselves to the all-wise and kindly disposition of Heaven, and, together with Jesus when in His Agony, we look up to the Father in our affliction and say: *Thy will be done*—let Thy holy grace strengthen us to observe Thy law and to bear with Christian courage the trials and sufferings of this life.

Give us this day our daily bread: While we should labor cheerfully and with prudent foresight in our temporal interests, we should acknowledge in Divine Providence the source of all earthly blessings, and, casting away both avarice and inordinate solicitude, we should daily pray for our corporal sustenance and all that it involves; while remembering that the passing elements of our earthly life are but the symbols of our spiritual and eternal needs—God's truth and grace here and God's joy and glory hereafter, these are the wants—the bread and nourishment of our immortal souls, and, in multiplying earthly bread for the multitude, Jesus meant to teach and did expressly teach that He is the necessary living bread of our Christian life, provided for

us in His adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist: "I am the bread of life. . . . He that eateth Me, the same shall live by Me— Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you cannot have life in you."

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us: The chief attribute which the Father has exerted in our behalf, for the sake of His Son and on account of His atoning merits, is that of His mercy in pardoning our sins. Yet, at the same time, in praying for this mercy we are warned against all self-delusion by the conditional clause in this petition: *As we forgive them who trespass against us,* according to the teaching of our Lord: "Be ye therefore merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful, and forgive one another as your heavenly Father hath forgiven you. . . . For if you do not forgive your brother his offenses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your sins. . . . Forgive, therefore, and you shall be forgiven."

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PROTESTANTISM A FALSE PROPHET

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them."—Matt., vii, 15-16.

A prophet, in the sense of the New Testament and of the Christian Dispensation, is a teacher of the Christian Religion; and a false prophet is a teacher of doctrines opposed to the Religion of Jesus Christ. The false prophet, while seeking his own exaltation and enrichment through the corruption of Christian truth and the perversion of souls, always poses as the possessor of superior wisdom and goodness. Exploiting the pride and passions of men, he represents himself as the champion of their liberties and the hero of religious reformation. Almost every century in the Christian era has had its false prophet, who, in his day, succeeded in withdrawing the careless and lax from the faith; but there is one that has surpassed all others and has the most egregiously imposed upon Christian society, and that one is Protestantism. The originators of Protestantism, the self-styled Reformers, were false prophets. They flattered tyrannical and turbulent princes by advocating national Churches independent of the See of Peter and subject to the Royal Supremacy. They flattered the proud of mind by proclaiming the right of individual private judgment in all matters of Christian belief. They flattered the depraved by denying the necessity of good works for salvation and by asserting the *total depravity* of man and the consequent loss of free will. They flattered the presumptuous and hypocritical by a false spirituality, teaching that the grace of God, once possessed, could never be lost, whatever sins might be committed; so that the unjust and adulterer is always "A pleasant child."

Protestantism claims to be the author of modern liberty and progress, when, on the contrary, it long and furiously opposed these blessings by handing over the faith, the conscience and the lives of Christian peoples to the dictates and penal laws of Protestant Kings and Parliaments; by denying the value of human reason and the existence of free will, and by opposing the spread of education and the study of the arts and sciences, which it styled "Vain human things."

And because the nineteenth century, just past, boasted much of itself as a great success, Protestantism loudly claimed the credit for its "Progress." For the religious agnosticism of the nineteenth century Protestantism may rightly claim the credit; but the source of the scientific and material progress of that century is to be found in the human mind, which, a century before Protestantism appeared, was in full career of activity when, under the encouraging unity of Christendom, the great Catholic scientist, Columbus, discovered the New World. Protestantism has nothing to do with modern inventions,—its very essence is Calvin's denial of free will; Luther's denunciation of human reason; absolute predestination of men to hell; infant damnation, and, in its fundamental principle or reason of being, the denial of the Church's divine authority in matters of Christian belief, and the rebellious appeal to private judgment.

Coming to men in the clothing of sheep, Protestantism pretends to respect the Bible. Fully a century before the Reformation the printing press, in the hands of a united Catholic world, had issued two hundred editions of the Bible in the vernacular language of all nations; but Protestantism, wherever it gained the ascendant, seized on and monopolized the press; and its first publication was a translation of the Bible, in which, for sectarian purposes, it deliberately corrupted the Sacred Text in not less than forty passages pertaining to vital doctrines of Christianity.

"Beware of false prophets, by their fruits ye shall know them." The last fruit of Protestantism is the materialistic philosophy of our day which aims at banishing God from His creation and the Son of God from His spiritual sovereignty over human society, and the consequent deluge of blood and iron that is now destroying the nations. "Beware of false prophets"—of their pretended light and liberty, which are darkness and corruption. Beware of their lying literature—Masonic and socialist. Let our Catholic young men, who must face the danger amid a de-Christianized society, strengthen their faith by the attentive reading of Catholic works and by the earnest practice of their religion. And let Catholic parents, as they value their salvation and that of their children, attend strictly to their children's Catholic training, and especially to their early and frequent communion,—so that the rising Catholic generation may be the friends of Jesus and the hope of the Church, and may not be found, in the approaching evil days, enlisted in the cause of the false prophet and parading, deluded and degraded, in the ranks of the enemies of God.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

OUR DUTY TOWARD THE POOR

"Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting tabernacles."—Luke, xvi, 9.

By the design of God the human race is bound together as a universal family in a solidarity of mutual dependence, responsibility and helpfulness. Our temporal welfare is made to depend on the products which we wring by labor from the earth, which Divine Providence intended primarily for the support of the life of all in suitable measure. If, therefore, in the natural course, wealth accumulates largely in the hands of an individual

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it should be used with a sense of responsibility to the community and to God. In relation to the right of God, our personal right in earth's goods is restricted to their use; and they should be used in accordance with the will of God, of Whom we are the stewards and to Whom we must render account.

The poor are, in part, the natural and divinely ordained beneficiaries of the trust which the rich hold as agents under Providence; and hence the early divine legislation on the moral use of riches: "There will not be wanting poor in the ('promised') land of thy habitation; therefore I command thee to open thy hand to thy needy and poor brother" (Deut., xv, 11). When therefore the rich, abusing their limited right in property, insist on their legal claims so far as to refuse all aid to the poor, they sin grievously—even as any robber—against the natural and divine law of justice. They sin grievously also against Christian charity.

The supernatural relationship into which God, in His infinite love, has elevated mankind in His Incarnate Son Jesus Christ, binds men to one another by a holier and more intimate bond than that of our natural humanity, and calls for a tenderer piety towards our brother man. This piety is commanded and exemplified in the teaching and the life of Christ. In His sermon on the Mount Jesus spoke for the poor and said: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. . . . Give and it shall be given unto you—full measure, pressed down and running over, will they return unto your bosom." He warned us, by His parable, of the fate of Dives for refusing aid to poor Lazarus; and, identifying Himself with the poor and making their cause His own, He declared that the eternal destiny of the rich will be decided by their conduct toward the unfortunate, whom he calls His brethren. "In that day the Son of man will say to those on His left: Depart from me, ye cursed, into ever-

lasting fire. For I was hungry and you did not give me to eat; I was naked and you clothed me not. . . . For as long as you did it not to the least of these my brethren, you did it not to me. Then He will say to those on His right: Come, ye blessed of My Father, and possess the Kingdom prepared for you. For I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was naked and you clothed me. . . . For as long as you did it to one of these my brethren you did it unto me; enter into the joy of your Lord."

The Incarnate Son of God submitted to the poorest of human conditions in order to expiate our avarice; to uplift a sordid world by the might of His divine example, and to induce His followers to considerateness and liberality toward the poor. He did not condemn riches, nor the rich, but the pride, the apostasy and the cruel inhumanity which riches occasion in the hearts of those who put their trust in wealth and not in God.

And what a gigantic task He set for His Apostles to accomplish in the spiritual conquest of the pagan world! Ignorant of the true God and with no conception of the spiritual worth of man, the cultured pagans of Greece and Rome regarded themselves as the absolute masters and gods of their possessions; and they considered earthly goods only as a means of satisfying their ambition, pride and passions. They thus placed a gulf between themselves and the poor; living in pampered sensuality while the poor languished from lack of the necessaries of life. And this on a world-wide scale. Beneath the heel of privileged wealth the whole world lay groaning in abject poverty and slavery. This is what the Apostles of Christ had to face, and what early Christianity, under bloody persecutions, had to endure; till, at length, above the clank of human shackles and above the roaring flames of the Martyr's pyre prevailed the truth in victorious trumpet-blasts proclaiming human dignity and free-

dom: "God created man to His own image and likeness!"—Before this truth and its sacred conclusions the pagan ideal was hauled down and the Christian Standard run up, under which faith in Christ and brotherly love united and ennobled mankind as one family of the Children of God throughout the Christian world.

As the image and likeness of God, therefore, man's God-given faculties and rights must be respected; and, whoever, having abundant means above his rational needs, refuses to answer the appeal of his indigent brother incurs the mortal guilt of injustice and uncharity and the penalty of eternal damnation. "We have passed from death to life because we love the brethren. Let us love in truth and in deed. He who loveth not abideth in death. But he that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need and shall close up his compassion from him, how doth the charity of God abide in him?" (1 John, 3). "God hath chosen the poor, rich in faith," as heirs to the Kingdom promised to those that love Him, and their patient sufferings and grateful prayers are the most powerful plea for grace and mercy upon the rich who will relieve their misfortune.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON HEARING HOLY MASS

"It is written: my house is a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves. And he was teaching daily in the temple."—Luke, xix, 46-47.

As we are bound by the law of God to observe the Lord's day, we should be careful to fulfill this obligation in the manner intended by the law, that is, by the devout attendance at the Divine worship for the honor of God and for our own spiritual benefit.

The Holy Mass is the Commemorative Sacrifice which Jesus made of Himself upon the Cross. In His institution of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, or the Holy Mass, at the Last Supper, He expressly connected it with the Sacrifice He was about to offer on Calvary, saying: "This is my body, which shall be delivered up for you. This is the chalice of the New Testament in my blood, which shall be shed for the remission of sins. This do ye for the commemoration of Me." The only difference, then, between the Mass and the sacrificial death of Jesus on the Cross is, that, in the Mass Jesus is offered up in the hands of His priesthood in an unbloody manner and without undergoing death, though His redeeming death is mystically and strikingly enacted on the Altar by the separate consecration of the species of bread and wine; but the same Victim is offered up in the Mass Who offered Himself up for the world's redemption on the Cross. It is therefore by our attendance at Holy Mass that we may be truly present at the Sacrifice of Calvary and may make it our own with all its mercies and graces.

To hear Mass properly, therefore, we should adore, thank, propitiate and petition God through Christ our Lord, and in Union with Him. Now, to fulfill these obligations of Divine worship, our attendance at Holy Mass should be punctual and devout. We should be present in time to begin the Mass together with the priest. It is the public worship of God, and an important part of the Holy Sacrifice is comprised in the Psalms, prayers, lections and Canticles which precede the Offertory as a preparation for the Divine Mysteries about to be acted. The priest begins the Mass as the Divinely appointed leader and representative of a supposed actually present congregation. He makes public acknowledgment to God, to the Saints and to the congregation of his sinfulness, and calls upon the assembled faithful to pray for him. Mounting the Altar steps, and always

speaking for them, he recites aloud the anthems and verses of the *Introit;* nine times He implores God's mercy; he intones the Angelic hymn of Glory to God and peace to men; he turns to salute the present people in the name of God; he pours forth the grand prayers of the Church for them; he reads for them the Epistle, and recites the Gradual; he pronounces for them the Gospel of Christ; he confesses the sublime Christian Creed. It is a public and magnificent preparation for the Holy Mysteries, and comprises nearly a third part of the Mass. And yet during all that time crowds of belated Catholics are seen flowing into the Church; and they persist in this conduct in spite of continual admonition from the Altar, and without the least apparent intention of ever being punctual. Instead of duly worshiping God, such people offer a scandalous irreverence to the Sanctity of the Mass. Let them reflect that, in the things so directly pertaining to His worship, God is infinitely jealous, and treats us as we treat Him. Indifference, sloth and negligence towards Him check the flow of His favors and graces, while fervent readiness in His service opens His bountiful hand and induces Him to overwhelm us with His Goodness. And when you enter the Church let your genuflexion be a thoughtful and deliberate adoration of Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, present in the Holy Eucharist in the Tabernacle of the Altar, where the angels of God, who see His face, adore Him—"to whom every knee shall bow of those that are in heaven, on earth and under the earth."

We should hear Mass devoutedly. A merely corporal presence in the Church will not fulfill the intent of the law of Divine worship. The mind and heart should be directed devoutly to God and to the sacred act of Divine worship that is going on in the Mass. Wilful inattention during Mass is always indevout and sinful; yet there are Catholics who will talk and laugh during Mass!

The Holy Mass is the prayer of Christ on the Cross for our salvation. To hear Mass devoutly, therefore, we should earnestly pray with Him,—making acts of adoration, faith, contrition, hope, love and thanksgiving, and, together with the adorable Victim on the Altar, we should offer up ourselves to God, to whom we belong and on whom we depend.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE QUALITIES OF PRAYER

"And to some who trusted in themselves as Just, and despised others, He spoke this parable: Two men went up into the temple to pray, etc."—Luke, xviii, 9.

The divine privilege granted us of prayer to God, by which we fulfill the duty of Religion and seek the blessings which we need, requires that so holy an act should have the qualities that will make it acceptable to God and efficacious to ourselves.

The first thing required of us for prayer is to recollect ourselves in God. For we are about to address ourselves to Him, and should therefore put ourselves in His presence. "When thou goest to pray, prepare thy soul, and be not like one who tempteth God." If, through negligence, our mind is absent from God when we pray, we insult and tempt Him by irreverence and our prayer is mere lip service,—without object or purpose. At the very beginning of our prayer, then, we should call God to our mind. He is everywhere; the Infinite Spirit who fills heaven and earth and supports all things. Having done this, we should adore Him and offer our whole being, to do with us as He wills.

The qualities that our prayer should have are, humility, confidence and earnestness. We should humble ourselves under the

mighty hand of God and acknowledge our unworthiness in His sight. "He hath regard to the prayer of the humble" (Ps. x, 15). "The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds; and he shall not arise till the most High hear" (Eccl., xxxv, 21). Say with the humble Publican: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner." For "a contrite and humble heart God will not despise." If we are humble and contrite in our prayer to God, our hearts will be free from enmity towards our neighbor, whom we forgive as we pray to be forgiven, and for whom we pray as for ourselves.

Our prayer should be confident. We should have confidence in God, in His infinite goodness and in His promise to hear and help us. "When you pray, believing you shall receive." Let him ask in faith nothing wavering. God is our Father; Jesus, His Incarnate Son, is our Mediator and Advocate, and the Holy Spirit of love pleads for us; why should we not have confidence? Thus the Publican prayed and was heard, as all have ever been who have put their trust in God.

Our prayer should be earnest, that is, attentive and fervent; with our mind and our heart upon it. We are speaking to God and pleading in the tremendous interests of our eternal Salvation. It is not a time for listless manner or wandering thoughts. Deliberate and voluntary distraction in prayer is always at least a venial sin of irreverence. Make use of the means which control attention; employ your Christian imagination, and picture to your mind the scenes and mysteries in the redeeming life of the Son of God from His Crib at Bethlehem to His death on the Cross. In contemplating Him all distractions vanish, and love is inflamed. Yet if the mind is habitually dissipated at other times, the time of prayer will naturally be a continuous battle with our distractions. For lack of one or the other of these dispositions —humility, confidence and earnestness, many prayers are never

answered. The prayer of the Pharisee lacked them all and was a striking display of their opposites, and left him all the worse for his religious mockery. The prayer of the Publican was humble, confiding and earnest, and he went down to his house justified and blessed.

We must persevere in prayer: God is the same Supreme Excellence and Sovereign Master on whom we depend to-day as yesterday and to-morrow and until the end of our lives, and a habit of piety must be established in our souls by constant communing with Him. Often the answer to our petitions is delayed until the habit of humble, confident and earnest prayer is acquired,—until prayer becomes spontaneous, regular and habitual. We should persevere in prayer because properly conditioned prayer is a true banking with God,—accumulating for us, with great interest, the merit He has been pleased to attach to it, and drawing the favor of His answer to it here and the promised eternal reward hereafter. We should persevere in prayer because prayer is like oars put into our hands by which we are to impel the boat of our life, our spiritual life, up the moral stream to our heavenly landing place, where God and the Blessed await us. We therefore must keep on rowing regularly to make progress daily to the end; for if we cease rowing we glide swiftly back down the stream to certain disaster. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." We should persevere in prayer because through the habit of prayer which possesses the due qualities we cultivate and maintain within us a religious mind and a lively faith; we become well-founded on hope and rooted in charity by the experience of God's goodness; we come to conceive a just horror of sin; we have a ready recourse to the divine consolations and protection in our trials and dangers, and our whole Christian life and character become solidly established.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE SACRAMENTAL SYSTEM IN THE CHURCH

"And taking him from the multitude apart, He put his fingers into his ears, and spitting, he touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven He groaned, and said to him: Be thou opened."—Mark, vii, 33, 34.

The ceremonial manner in which our Lord worked the miraculous cure of the deaf-mute illustrates the wisdom and appropriateness of the sacramental system which He instituted in the Church for the sanctification of our souls. Through the ministry of His priests Jesus acts upon our souls for our sanctification by means of certain signs and ceremonies and material things instituted and ordained by Himself, and these are the Sacraments or outward signs of inward grace sanctifying the soul.

In this way our Saviour deals with us in a manner the most conformed to our nature and condition. For, man, composed of body and soul, is a part of this visible world of sense and it is through the senses that he attains to the things of the spiritual order. Hence, while God can dispense with visible or sensible instruments in conferring His grace, it is more in conformity with our nature and condition that His grace be conveyed to us under visible signs, as, of their nature, they secure our attention and rouse us to a correspondence of mind and will with His interior operation in our souls. An analogy of this is seen in the natural phenomenon of language: By convention among men, words are made to stand for ideas and thereby enable us to communicate intelligently with one another; for the word is the sign of the idea and conveys our thought into the mind of our fellowman. By the design of the Son of God in His institution of the Sacraments, the material order is made instrumental to our salvation. Again: we are a fallen race, having been seduced and overcome by the attraction of material things, while to spiritual

things we became morally deaf and dumb; and we are still inveterately inclined to put the material world between ourselves and God, hiding from Him behind the things of sense. God, therefore, by the Sacramental system, takes material things and makes them the signs and vehicles of the spiritual gifts which we need for our regeneration and salvation.

Furthermore: The Sacramental system is the most appropriate remedy for our moral maladies, and chiefly for our pride, our sloth and our superstition. A purely interior system of religious life, affected by some of the Sectaries, is but a plea for pride and spiritual sloth, and is usually accompanied with superstitious practices. In our unregenerated state, tortured by our disorderly passions, we cry out for spiritual strength, for the grace of God; we want to be healed, to become God's children and members of His Kingdom. The Church answers our longing by telling us in the name of Christ: "Be baptised for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the Holy Ghost." But pride revolts, and asks: "Can a little water poured on my forehead cleanse my soul from sin and give me the very Spirit of God?" The Church replies with the Son of God: "Amen, unless you be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of heaven." And the Church appeals to her commission from Christ. "Go and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. He that will believe and be baptised shall be saved: He that will not believe shall be condemned."

Again: After baptism, through a human frailty for which our Saviour provided, we may fall into mortal sin and so lose our baptismal innocence, and the soul, tormented by its guilty conscience, wants to make peace with God, to get away from its sins and regain God's grace and friendship. The Church answers our yearning in the language of the Apostle: "God is good, and if we

confess our sins He will forgive them; confess your sins therefore one to another." But the pride of fallen man revolts against confessing to men, and says: "I will confess in secret to God." The Church rejoins: "While it is always God that forgives sins whenever forgiven, the way dictated by pride for obtaining forgiveness is presumptuous, uncertain and contrary to the authentic way established by the Saviour when He delegated the priests of His Church to receive our confession and to forgive our sins in His name: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain they are retained." Sacramental absolution pronounced by the priesthood of Christ upon our contrite confession, this is the visible tribunal of mercy set up among men by the Saviour to take away our sins and to forestall the dread sentence which Christ must pronounce upon the proud and impenitent at the final tribunal of eternal justice on the Judgment Day.

The Sacramental system of sanctification is the Divinely intended remedy against superstition. This inveterate moral infirmity of fallen man prevails wherever there is no faith or a false belief. It consists in seeking spiritual things through ceremonies and material objects which are not ordained of God for such purpose; which are out of all proportion with the end that is sought, and which are foolishly hoped in as certain in their pretended results. Now the seven Sacraments of the Church are the determined number of signs or ceremonies instituted by Christ as the instruments of His sanctifying grace. As His institutions, therefore, they preclude and forbid all other symbols that may be designed by men and pretended to as certain means of grace. No man can institute a Sacrament or instrument of justification. This is the power and right only of the God-man, the author of our salvation; and every attempt of the kind by men is a mortal sin of superstition.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ON THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOR

"But he willing to justify himself, said to Jesus: And who is my neighbor?" —Luke, x, 29.

As was the case with his fellow-lawyers and leaders of the people, this man who interrogated our Lord upon the law of moral life had no love for God nor for his neighbor. With his class, he deemed Jesus a prevaricator of the law, when, in truth, He was its highest exemplar and fulfilment. For, "the end of the law was Christ." But he sought by his questions to entrap our Lord into proposing Himself as the object of man's supreme love, and also into a declaration that the hated Samaritans and the Gentiles, contrary to false Judaic teaching, were our "neighbor" and were included as objects of our love under the law of fraternal Charity.

Our moral likeness to God, which is wrought by the reproduction of His perfections in our life, is the necessary condition for our eternal association with Him in Heaven, that is, for our salvation. Now God is love—the Living Infinite, Uncreated Love; and this is the perfection which He has most of all manifested in His dealings with mankind—creating us; assuming our nature; redeeming us by the sufferings of the Cross, and calling us to eternal happiness with Himself, because He loved us. His love embraces all men; and therefore whoever loves God loves his neighbor as he loves himself, and for God's sake. Our neighbor is everybody, every rational creature. For every man is the object of God's love; made to His image and likeness; called into brotherhood with Christ and to be the adopted Son of the Eternal Father; redeemed by the sufferings and death of the Divine Saviour, and called to the same eternal happiness as ourselves. By the virtue of charity we love our neighbor as ourselves, that is, after the manner in which we rationally love ourselves. We

say rationally; for there is a false love of self as there is a false love of the neighbor, and both are opposed to charity. He who lives in mortal sin does not truly love himself, for he deprives himself of an eternal and an infinite good—his salvation. "He that loveth iniquity hateth his own soul." And he who associates another with himself in mortal sin hates his neighbor; for he cooperates in his eternal ruin; and both he and his accomplice incur the penalty of hell, where they will mutually curse each other as the occasion of their eternal damnation. We love our neighbor as we love ourselves when we seek his true welfare, just as we seek our own true welfare; when we wish him to be free from evil, just as we wish ourselves to be free from evil, and when we are willing to aid and comfort our neighbor in his distress, just as, in our own distress, we wish to receive aid and comfort.

By charity we love our neighbor *for God's sake,* that is, in and for God—to please God, and with a view to our neighbor's final good; and therefore not merely for the agreeable attraction our neighbor may exert on our natural affection, nor for any temporal advantages to be gained from him, for such is the way in which the world and the heathen love, which is but self-seeking.

And as our neighbor is everybody without exception, he also is our neighbor who, for whatever cause, real or imagined, has come to be regarded by us as our enemy. We cannot love God and hate our enemy. This was the self-deception of the Jewish lawyers and pharisees, who made a distinction—where there was no difference—between neighbor and enemy, and taught: "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." The Son of God rebuked this error and sternly condemned the universal hatred for the Samaritan, the Gentile and the stranger which disgraced both the Hebrew people and the pagan world. With Supreme Authority and under the penalty of eternal punishment He promulgated

the law of universal Charity and said: "I say unto you, love your enemies; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you; that you may be the children of your Father in Heaven, who maketh His sun to shine upon the good and the bad and raineth upon the just and the unjust." If we love God, therefore, we love our enemy as we love ourselves, and for God's sake; hence we have forgiven him his offenses; we are ready to aid and comfort him in his need and affliction, and we include him in our prayers, and say to God sincerely: "Father, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us."

This is the high and Godlike virtue of Christian Charity. It is the noble imitation of the Divine perfections as displayed for our example in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. It is the true grandeur of soul required of His followers and brethren, who are the adopted sons of His Father and co-heirs with Him to the eternal inheritance.

Fraternal Charity, the universal, disinterested and patient love for all men for God's sake, is a supernatural virtue and the highest expression of sanctifying grace in the soul. Merely natural humanity or philanthropy cannot rise to this virtue nor fill its place. Our enfeebled will, without grace, is held captive by inordinate self-love and by the delusive charms of nature, and lacks the moral force and courage to embrace God by a love of preference above all things; and as, by our unaided will we cannot exert this supreme love towards God, so, in our relations with our fellowman, our intercourse, devoid of God's over-ruling grace, degenerates into selfishness, injustice and conflict, and our most humane efforts in aid of the unfortunate become exclusive and discriminating according to our preferences, and soon break down under pressure of the endless exactions of human misery.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

GRATITUDE TOWARDS GOD

"Were not ten made clean? And where are the nine? There is no one found to return thanks but this stranger."—Luke, xvii, 19.

Gratitude toward God is a part of religion and a debt of honor which we owe to the Almighty for His immense and countless benefits.

God has always required of man the duty of rendering thanksgiving to Him. He appointed Levites to "stand every morning to thank the Lord and praise His glorious Name" on behalf of His People, and He classed the unthankful with blasphemers and unholy, and punished them severely.

Ingratitude towards God is a sin by which we ignore and forget God's benefits; abuse His gifts and render Him evil for good. In this day's Gospel we have an instance of deep and intense gratitude on the part of the Samaritan leper, and of ingratitude horrible and incomprehensible on the part of the nine Jews, his companions in misery and the sharers in his cure. What a benefit Jesus had conferred upon them! Leprosy was an awful disease; the body of its victim slowly and by piece-meal rotted and fell away and the mind became melancholy, dulled and subdued. To prevent contagion the leper was driven from human habitations and was required to warn all who were approaching him and to cry out: "Unclean! Unclean!" But Jesus mercifully drew near these ten miserables in order to cure them, and He at once granted their prayer by simply sending them to the priests—the constituted judges of leprosy—and on their way they were suddenly healed, made clean, and healthier than ever before. How great was this favor! Delivered from the most formidable and humiliating of maladies! Restored to perfect health of body

and brightness and joy of mind! Admitted again to human society and to their homes, their families and their friends! Could anything ever efface from their minds the memory of such a benefit? Yet only the despised Samaritan—the hated "Stranger" —returned to thank his Saviour! The nine others—all of them of the "Chosen People"—while enjoying the blessing of their cure, utterly ignored their benefactor; and, in all probability, these same ingrates who had cried to Jesus: "Master, have mercy on us," we found, later on, among His enemies shouting for His crucifixion. And we? Are we grateful to God for His Goodness towards us? for the blessing of our existence? for our creation, and the creation of an entire world for our use? for the spiritual nature and endowments of our being and the immortal and happy destiny God has purposed for us? Are we grateful for the coming of the Eternal Son of God in our own nature? for His having made us His brethren and the sons and heirs of His Heavenly Father? for our redemption at the infinite price of His Precious Blood? for our calling to the divine life of His faith and sanctifying grace, and for His repeated mercy in pardoning our dreadful sins? Are we grateful to God for His constant fatherly providence over us from our childhood days to this present hour? If we are grateful for these incalculable blessings, we keenly recognize and constantly acknowledge that our life is the gift of God, and we employ our faculties to honor Him; we love to recall to mind His benefits by attendance at religious conference in which His blessings are recounted; we endeavor by prayer and the Sacraments to abide in His grace and love, and we attend devoutly at Holy Mass, in which our Redemption is commemorated and the highest possible honor and thanksgiving are rendered to the Blessed Trinity.

The chief complaint of the Almighty recorded in the Scriptures is directed against the sin of ingratitude. "They have

forgotten all my benefactions and the merciful wonders I did for them. . . . The ox hath known His Master's crib, but Israel hath not known me. . . . I have created and brought up children and they have despised me. . . . They were saturated with my gifts and have forgotten me."

But while gratitude, or the habit of thanksgiving, opens the way to new and still greater blessings from God, ingratitude makes void His gifts and promises and closes up the fountains of His bounty. Like the nine lepers, the Jewish nation, once the chosen People of God, added to all their iniquities the most monstrous sin of ingratitude. "To them God had given the adoption as of children, and the Testament and the law and the Service of God and the promises; the Fathers were of them; of whom also was Christ, according to the flesh, who is, over all, God blessed forever." But, for their ingratitude, they were rejected, and the Kingdom of the Messias was given to the Gentiles, as their own prophets had foretold.

But the Gentile world had to be humbled before the truth and grace of Christ could prevail to regenerate and elevate it into the Christian world. We are told that the Romans, in their polity and philosophy, were Monotheistic. Yet, in fact, "when they knew God they did not honor him as God," nor make Him known, "nor give thanks"; but they encouraged the idolatrous worship of all the false gods throughout the Empire and persecuted the Church of the Living God; for which cause He delivered them up to a reprobate sense, and the Empire into the hands of the Goths.

And modern Society, once Christian, has incurred the dishonorable note and the signal penalty of the *ingrate*. For, outside the Catholic Church to-day, Society has forsaken the Incarnate Son of God and His truth and law. It has rejected

Him from its entire life and thought. It can hardly, therefore, claim any special grace or protection of Heaven, nor can anyone doubt that its present unhappy condition is the Divine punishment for its ingratitude.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

AVARICE

"Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His Justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."—Matt., vi, 33.

It is our duty as rational and free creatures of God to actively concur with the disposition of Providence; and, while treasuring and cultivating—first and above all—the supernatural gifts of faith and grace through prayer and Communion, to labor honestly and confidently with mind or hand for our temporal welfare in reasonable measure.

Christ warns us against the danger of putting the temporal order and its gifts above the spiritual and eternal and, by an inordinate love of riches, of abandoning God and our salvation and becoming the slaves of Mammon.

He who is dominated by the vice of avarice dishonors God, whom he abandons for money; he degrades and defiles his soul, whose spiritual aspirations he depresses and whose eternal inheritance he barters for earth's dross; he defrauds his fellowman, whom he makes the victim of his unjust and merciless dealing, and he is ready for any crime that will bring him wealth with immunity. God commands that in our business transactions we should be honest and conscientious, and not appropriate to ourselves anything that belongs to another; but the slave of avarice easily persuades himself that the greatest commercial and industrial impositions are permissible. God commands us to relieve

the poor; but the slave of avarice exploits the necessitude of the poor for his own greater enrichment and drives the suppliant angrily from his door. God commands that we be solicitous for our eternal salvation; but the slave of avarice laughs at God and Heaven and surrenders his soul to Mammon—the demon of money. Hence the declaration of the Holy Ghost: "They that are over-eager to become rich fall into the snare of the devil, and into many hurtful desires which drown men into destruction and perdition."

And, again, the divine warning: "If riches lawfully abound set not thy heart on them to serve them as a slave; but, as a master, administer and distribute them for the honor of God, for thy soul's salvation and thy brother's relief. For thou art the steward of the gifts of God, and must render to Him a strict account in the end." See the lengths in iniquity to which avarice will go! King Achab coveted the neighboring vineyard of his poor subject, Naboth, and to secure it he left him to the wicked designs of the queen, Jezabel, who had him falsely accused of crime and slain; whereupon all he possessed was declared forfeit to the King.

For money Delilah betrayed Samson into the hands of the Philistines. For money Judas betrayed the Son of God. After warning us against this terrible vice, Christ forbids also all inordinate anxiety or worry over our temporal affairs, as a sin of distrust of Him. The moderate acquisition of earthly goods is intended for us by a fatherly Providence, who has made our temporal welfare consequent and dependent upon our honest labor and intelligent and prudent foresight. So that every industrious and honest man has a natural and God-given right to temporal possessions accruing from his honorable industry, and of which no human power can justly deprive him. Avoiding both idleness and extravagance, we should trust that He who

gave us our bodily life will give what is necessary for its decent support. Will He who implanted such love and care in the hearts of parents for their children refuse to our honest labor the temporal goods which, in reasonable measure, are its divinely appointed recompense? And, especially, will He not care for us whom He has adopted as His children—the disciples and brethren of His only begotten Incarnate Son? The heathens, who knew not God, might have had some plausible reason to worry over their temporal affairs from their distrust of the heartless gods who were but the creatures of their own narrow and timid imaginings; but Christians can have no ground for such disquietude. Hence the admonition of the Holy Ghost: "I would have you to be without solicitude, casting all your care upon God, for He hath care of you." Let Christian workingmen, therefore, while shunning the advocates of class-hatred and violence, unite to exact by all lawful means the full measure of industrial justice from their employers; but, having secured a decent living wage for honest labor, let them seek the higher and divine things of the spirit.

As there is no vice more dangerous than avarice to the Christian character, so there is none more dangerous to the civil and social welfare of the nation. What is the cause of the present social unrest? It is that our commercial age has abandoned God for money. It has put the earthly, temporal order above and in opposition to the spiritual and eternal and is thereby frustrating the beneficent ends of both orders of Providence and filling human life with misery and animosity. Our apostate age has built up its temple of Mammon and the iniquitous foundations of contempt for God and injustice to men, and it is no wonder that there is social unrest. But it is an unrest that bodes profound disturbance of the national peace and a severe lesson to the banded avaricious lords of wealth. For as there is a protecting

Providence over an honestly industrious people who trust in God, there is also, as history attests, an avenging Providence which pursues a usurping and domineering avarice, and which may permit the storm-floods of the popular wrath to break forth at last and sweep away a monstrous and intolerable injustice.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SANCTIFYING GRACE

"And Jesus said: Young man, I say to thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up. And He gave him to his mother."—Luke, vii, 14, 15.

This scene of the dead young man resuscitated by our Lord and restored to his mother directs our thoughts to the wonderful working of God's grace in the Church.

While the Church is holy, she is forced to weep over many of her members who, though still possessing her true faith received in their baptism, have ceased to live by her supernatural life—the life of sanctifying grace.

Sanctifying grace is the divinely ordained supernatural means of delivering us from sin and leading us by holiness to the joys and glories of Heaven. Its source is the Incarnate Son of God, who came to us "full of grace and truth," and who said to St. Paul amid the Apostle's temptations: "My grace is sufficient for you; for" (my) "power is made manifest in" (human) "infirmity." Without this grace we are nothing, and can do nothing deserving of Heaven; "It is God who worketh in us both to will and to accomplish."

God pursues the sinner and aids the just by actual graces, constant and innumerable, natural and supernatural, exterior and interior; but, in speaking of the State of Grace, we mean interior

sanctifying grace, which is a permanent supernatural quality or habit infused by God into the soul, elevating it into the divine order and enabling it to perform with ease, promptness and joy supernatural acts of virtue meritorious of the divine reward of eternal life. It is a masterful and sweet interior movement and attraction coming from God and abiding in the soul, and enabling us to exert a spiritual energy above our natural powers. It works the sinner's conversion and the saint's perfection. Look at St. Augustine: This holy and sublime Doctor of the Church was, when a young man, a very licentious pagan. But, endowed with a vast intelligence and ever thirsting for wisdom, he studied and tried every known pagan philosophy and found them wanting and unsatisfying; and he was very unhappy in his unbelief and sinful life. One day, studying the Epistles of St. Paul and recalling the noble Christian lives of the Fathers of the Desert, he was seized with an uncontrollable emotion arising from his admiration at the moral courage of the Christians, and with shame for his own moral cowardice. The actual grace of God was pressing for admission into his heart, but his vices pleaded against it, and he felt unable to leave them. In the struggle he cast himself down upon the ground and wept long and bitterly in his agony. Finally, he cried to God for help; and then he heard a voice telling him to open again the volume of St. Paul and read. Humbly and eagerly, amid his tears, he opened and read: "Put ye on the mighty grace of Jesus Christ, and make not vain provision for the corruptible flesh and its perishing concupiscences." And then, as he opened his whole heart to God in complete submission, sanctifying grace flooded his soul with heavenly light, power and sweetness, and Augustine rose firmly and joyfully determined to be a Christian and a saint. Such triumphs of grace are daily occurrences everywhere throughout the Church. Her spiritually dead and senseless children are being constantly re-

suscitated and restored to her arms by the sanctifying grace of Christ. It is a greater work than the miracle of raising the dead to the life of nature.

Given, as a condition of preparedness, faith, fear, hope and contrition, sanctifying grace captivates the submissive soul of the sinner, transforms it from the state of sin to that of sanctity; transfigures it with a spiritual beauty of divine light and love, and makes it the friend and the child of God. The sinner, that was, becomes a new man in justice and holiness, acceptable to God and heir to His eternal kingdom.

And this grace further adorns the soul with the ever-accompanying gifts of divine operative faith, hope and charity; with all the moral virtues and the seven gifts of the Spirit, and, to crown all, as God always comes with His sanctifying Grace, the personal indwelling of the Holy Ghost, with whom are the Father and the Son. Now what a monstrous evil mortal sin is, that banishes God and instantly destroys all this divine heaven in the soul! While no one knows with the absolute certainty of faith if he is in the State of Grace—unless he have a special revelation—for, we must "work out our Salvation with fear trembling"; yet, if we are fulfilling the conditions of salvation and curbing our passions and making a sincere and prayerful use of the Sacraments—the sources of grace, we have a moral certainty that we are in the State of Grace, and our only care must be to persevere in that grand and happy state. But to persevere we must progress in grace from virtue to virtue, for not to progress is to recede and make void the gift and intention of grace, which aims at our perfection—the perfection of Christian love.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

HUMILITY

"Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—Luke, xiv. 11.

Humility is a virtue founded on the knowledge of God and of ourselves, and is inspired by a just and holy fear of the Almighty, to whom alone all glory belongs. It inclines us, therefore, to acknowledge God as the source of all our good or excellence; to acquiesce in the truth of our own unworthiness, and to be willing to be known of men for no more than what we are in the sight of God.

On the other hand, pride is a vice which is founded on ignorance of God and of ourselves, or, worse still, is inspired by a daring and presumptuous scorn of all fear of the Almighty. The proud man refuses to acknowledge his dependence on God or his indebtedness to Him for the good or excellence he may possess. His excessive and senseless estimation of himself blinds him to his own limitations. He claims for himself all the glory of his achievements, and demands as his right the esteem and applause of men. He thus uses the very gifts of God to rob Him of His incommunicable glory, and lives, acts and schemes only for his own exaltation.

Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God and our model in all things, was, in His Sacred Humanity, the humblest of mankind, though incomparably the greatest, because His soul beheld God and understood man, and He came to expiate the falsehood and injustice of our pride by the depth of His willing humiliation. His command to us is: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." When His Apostles, not comprehending the character of His Kingdom, "strove among themselves who should be the

greater," He took a little child, and placing him in their midst, He said: "Whoever will not humble himself as this child shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Jesus designed to share with His Apostles, as with every true disciple, His eternal glory in heaven; but they must attain to that glory as He did, by the way of truth and sincerity, the way of humility. He was about to employ His Apostles in the mighty work of the regeneration of mankind, and it was necessary that He embue them with sublime spiritual light and miraculous power, by which they were to transform the human race and become the pillars of the Christian world. Hence, their highest wisdom and their safety lay in the simplicity of the child, confiding in Him alone; free from all envies and enmities; judging not anyone from circumstance of earthly position or fortune, but swayed only by their love for Christ and the desire of the salvation of all men through the knowledge and love of their Divine Redeemer. By the grace and virtue of humility the Apostles proved efficient instruments in the hands of the God-man, and they now reign with Him in the divine glory and joy of heaven, and they rule over the spiritual and moral world on earth for all time. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

And "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled." The proud have ever been allowed by God to fall into disgrace; as witness, the shameful lives of the Sixteenth-Century Reformers, who rose in the pride of their private judgment against the religious authority established by Christ in His Universal Church; and all history, ancient and modern, is full of signal instances of the Divine chastisement overtaking the loftiest among rulers and nations.

Recall to mind the miserable end of all those proud persecuting masters of the world-wide Roman Empire, and behold ful-

filled in them this criminal code of Heaven. Nero, in his misery, lays violent hands on himself; Domitian, Maximus and Decius are put to death; Valerian, taken captive by King Sapor of Persia, is made to serve for years as his stool to mount his horse, and is afterwards flayed alive, and his skin stuffed and hung up in the royal museum. These emperors of the world lived only for the vain breath of men. They sought only the glory derived from slaves, and not the glory of God. They could never, therefore, come to the Christian faith, which stands on eternal truth and justice—and therefore on humility; and, as the once self-humbled Son of God must forever reign from His exalted throne in Heaven and must control the destinies of the earth, those emperors, who stood in the way with a falsehood obstructing human regeneration, had to be put down and humbled. It is the same ever since and will be to the end of time among the kings and people of the earth, "He that exalteth himself shall be humbled."

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE LOVE OF GOD

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind."—Matt., xxii, 37.

The love of God and of our neighbor is properly called charity, a word which signifies an exalted and generous affection for God as the Being most dear to us and the object of our eternal beatitude, and for our neighbor as His beloved rational creature and our brother in God. We will consider at present the first part of this two-fold divine love—the duty of charity towards God. We should love God above all things, because He is God, infinitely lovable and infinitely deserving of all our love; because

He loves us, and we should make Him a return of love; and because unless we love Him we shall not be able to observe any other commandment of the moral law in its spirit and truth, nor save our souls, no matter how exact may be our external observance of the letter of the law; but, like the pharisees, we shall fail in the greater things of the law—justice, faith, and mercy—on which our eternal salvation depends.

God loves us with a love which we cannot measure nor comprehend, and designs our eternal beatitude in the vision of Himself in the infinite splendor of His goodness and truth.

And He has exerted all His attributes in our behalf—His power in creating us; His wisdom in ordering all things for our temporal and eternal welfare; His providence in foreseeing and providing for us; His mercy in pardoning us; His eternity in assuring us an endless happiness. He has placed no limit to His love for us—"God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son." Jesus, the Incarnate Word, is the infinite gift of God to man. Wishing to make us partakers of His Divinity, the Eternal Word assumed our nature and was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man. And the human nature which He assumed from us He gave back to us united to His Godhead, delivering Himself up as an infinite atoning victim for our redemption; reconciling us to the Father by His death for our sins upon the Cross. "He loved me and delivered Himself up for me" (Gal., ii, 20).

Jesus, the God-man, has placed Himself at the head of redeemed humanity as our teacher, leader and Saviour. He is with us and is all our own, in His living Body and Soul and Divinity, in the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist—the Divine Sum and Memorial of all the works of God's love for us.

Unless, therefore, we are monsters of insensibility, we must

recognize the duty of loving God. And God commands it. To refuse is to deny His infinite claim; to offend Him grievously and to forfeit our eternal beatitude. To refuse to love God above all things is to run counter to our rational nature, which is irresistibly impelled toward God as the Supreme Being and the center of our attraction. We rationally long for the All-perfect One; and, though this longing is not a virtue, but the original and unchangeable adjustment of our nature to our Creator, it is the basis on which the grace of charity rests and acts in our deliberate choice and preference of God.

Charity is a gift of God—a supernatural virtue infused into our souls in our baptism, and restored by penance, and is the necessary power by which to rise from sin and observe the Commandments. By charity we become the brethren of the Incarnate Son of God and the adopted children of His Eternal Father, with a divine right to supernatural aid in all our moral combats and in every emergency of our Christian life. It is charity that empowers us to curb every wrong impulse of our passions; to resist every temptation; to fulfill easily, promptly and joyfully every moral obligation; and when our life of probation closes here, and we drop every other virtue, as being but a temporary mantle, it is in the grace and power of immortal charity that we mount to the vision and possession of God.

This divine virtue is the true and indomitable source of the love of our neighbor, and is therefore the greatest social necessity and blessing. Jesus, our model and inspiration in all our social relations, said on the last evening of His mortal life: "But that the world may know that I love the Father, as He hath given me command so *do* I." And with these words He went, for our salvation, to the Cross. It was this Divine example, reproduced and resplendent in His Church as she rose upon the dark and

loveless pagan world, that drew mankind to God and into the true fraternity of His Church, and formed of the human race a universal Christian family pursuing in peace and concord every enlightened and beneficent measure of social relief and comfort.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

CONTRITION

"Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee."—Matt., ix.

While Jesus graciously healed the bodily infirmities of all who in faith and trust appealed to Him, His real mission was to loosen the terrible bonds of sin from the souls of the repentant—to heal the most appalling malady of the soul. "The Son of God came and died for our sins in order that penance and the remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations."

This wonderful and merciful power was first given to men in the God-man Himself—"And they glorified God who gave such power to men." Jesus communicated it to the priesthood of His everlasting Church saying to His Apostles: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them." So that, no matter how numerous or enormous a man's sins may be, whenever He truly repents of them the Church has the power to remit them.

In commanding us to seek pardon and in enjoining and empowering the Church to grant it, Jesus most certainly required a true repentance, that is, a contrite confession of our sins—especially our mortal sins, as by them we have grievously offended God; destroyed the divine life of grace in our souls, and incurred the loss of heaven and the pains of hell. Hence, contrition is an essential condition for obtaining forgiveness.

It is a hearty sorrow for having offended God, accompanied with a firm purpose to sin no more and to do penance and amend our life. In order to be efficacious as a preparatory disposition for sacramental absolution our contrition should have the following qualities: it should be interior, supernatural, universal, and sovereign. Interior: It should be from the heart, that is, from the mind and will. As it is from the intent of the heart that virtue and sin proceed, the heart of the sinner must be changed by a complete turning away from sin to God. All external acts of penance are worthless unless they proceed from the interior virtue of penance, that is, from contrition.

Our contrition, while truly from the heart, may yet be imperfect, that is, proceeding only from the sense of our loss of heaven and of our having incurred the penalty of hell. This imperfect sorrow, founded, as it is, on a right faith and a just fear of God, is called attrition, and is an efficacious disposition for the pardon of our sins when it is united with the Sacrament of Penance by the priest's absolution; but without the Sacrament it will not justify or deliver us from our mortal sins. For, the principle or motive of the fear of God has not, of itself alone, the force or virtue of a true conversion from sin to God. True conversion is the result of love; some beginning of love, at least, is implied in every true turning from sin to God; and it is the Sacrament that supplies the necessary grace of justification in those who confess with only attrition. Hence, were we in mortal sin and were dying or in imminent danger of death without having a priest to confess our sins to, it would be necessary for us to make an act of perfect contrition in order to be saved.

Our contrition should be supernatural. It should proceed from the divine virtue of faith in God and fear of His judgments, and should have for its motive a sense of the malice of our mortal sins as offenses against Him. A merely natural sorrow for our

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sins as the causes of our physical or social misfortune is not contrition, perfect or imperfect, and, as a principle of conversion to God, it is worthless.

Our contrition should be universal, that is, it should extend to all our mortal sins and to all their aggravating circumstances and consequences. Thus, for instance, if we have contrition, we shall feel the grave moral obligation, and be determined to make amends to our neighbor, by charity or justice, for every offense and injury of a grave nature that we have committed against him.

Our contrition should be sovereign. We should grieve more for having offended God than for any other evil that could befall us. For, contrition is an act of charity towards God. But the measure of contrition and of charity should be the same. Charity towards God is the most perfect love. Hence, the sorrow for our mortal sins as grievous offenses against God should be a supreme sorrow.

Whoever, in confessing his mortal sins, is sincerely resolved to begin a new life, to correct his bad habits and to shun the proximate occasions of mortal sin has true contrition. Whoever is not so resolved has none. The Incarnate Son of God, who wept, bled and died for our sins, said: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." The wise and blessed grieving, inspired by faith, hope and love, and bringing to our souls the divine life and comfort, is, to mourn for our mortal offenses against God, our Creator, who is infinitely holy and good, and whose kindness and patience in spite of all our ingratitude have never wearied. This should melt our hearts in happy tears of contrition, and, like the sorrow of Mary Magdalen and of St. Peter and of so many great saints who were once great sinners, this holy and blessed contrition should be a life-long disposition of our souls, establishing in us the saving habit and virtue of Christian compunction.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

DISPOSITIONS FOR RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

"Friend, how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding garment?"—Matt., xxii, 12.

Christ, the Almighty and merciful author of our salvation, instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist to put us in possession of a divine worship and the means of the most intimate union with Himself. The Eucharist is the Sacrament which contains the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ under the forms or appearance of bread and wine. It is offered up in the Holy Mass with infinite honor to the Blessed Trinity, and is received in Communion, as our spiritual food, for the increase of sanctifying grace in our souls and our ultimate salvation.

Holy Communion is the receiving of the Body and Blood of Christ. It is necessary as a means of maintaining our Christian life, of advancing in virtue and of resisting our temptations, and is of strict obligation by reason of the express command of Christ. This is the Divine marriage banquet which the Heavenly Father holds for His Son, and to which all in His Kingdom—the Church—are called.

No act of ours could be holier than that of receiving Holy Communion; and hence the serious obligation on our part of preparing our souls for its worthy and fervent reception. The essential dispositions required of us are, to be in the state of grace and to have a right intention. We must be in the state of grace, that is, free from mortal sin. For, the Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament of the living, not of the dead. The soul must be spiritually living by sanctifying grace. Communion does not

ordinarily give the first or cleansing grace that takes away mortal sin—this effect is the proper work of the Sacrament of Penance. Communion increases the grace already existing in the soul. A soul in the state of mortal sin is the den of Satan. Let no one, therefore, dare to receive Jesus, the All-Holy, into this foul den. St. Paul, by the inspiritation of the Holy Ghost, warns us of the Divine Malediction incurred by those who should commit so enormous a sacrilege. He says: "The bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord? And the chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? Therefore let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the chalice. For whoever shall eat of this bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. . . . For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Judgment to himself" (1. Cor., xi). This was the Judgment that the King pronounced upon the wretch who appeared at the marriage banquet without the wedding garment of divine grace. But being in the state of grace, that is, free from mortal sin, we should come with all confidence to receive Holy Communion and should have the intention to please God alone and to become better.

In order to derive the full fruits of Holy Communion we should, by prayer and reflection before receiving, awaken in our souls the devotional dispositions of a lively faith, or the realization of Christ's presence in His Blessed Sacrament; of homage and worship by acts of adoration due to the God-man; of self-abasement in acknowledgment of our unworthiness; of renewed contrition, and of fervent love for our amiable Saviour, and an ardent desire for union with Him.

And as these dispositions may be realized in the souls of little children at the age of discretion, they also should be admitted to

early and frequent Communion. The law of the Church, notwithstanding the contrary local customs now done away with by Pius X., has always been that children are bound by the Paschal precept of Confession and Communion as soon as they arrive at the years of discretion, or the completion of their seventh year. Pius X. decreed that children should make their first Communion at about the age of seven. "The critical period of the life of the child," said the Holy Father, "begins at the age of seven, and the Blessed Sacrament was intended for that period as well as for later life. . . . It is quite possible that the child, left without Communion during that critical period, might take the wrong turn as regards God, might stain its soul with many grievous sins, and might never be brought back to piety. . . . Holy Communion is a necessary means of approach to our Saviour which should be made use of by every soul at the very time that the soul knows its significance; and the child should have the protecting and strengthening aid of the Blessed Sacrament from the beginning of its responsible life." No one can measure the desire of Jesus for union with every one of us, nor the exceeding need which each one of us has for union with Him. Let us reciprocate His love and secure our salvation by worthy, fervent and frequent Communion, which will establish between Him and us a holy personal friendship effacing all worldly attachments and enduring forever in the participation of His divine joy and glory in heaven.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

FAITH IN JESUS

"Unless you see signs and wonders you believe not."—John, iv, 48.

The Ruler in this day's Gospel knew, at least by report, that Jesus possessed miraculous power and that He never refused to aid those who appealed to Him; but the sublime truth, of which His miracles were a proof, that Jesus was, as He declared Himself to be, the Eternal Son of God Incarnate, was hidden from him by reason of his Judaic prejudice. For he held, with the other Rulers and leaders of the people, that the Christ, when He appeared, must show great and terrific wonders in the heavens and earth; but Jesus, for all His beneficent healing of the afflicted, was too humble for their proud views; and moreover He failed to respond to the false Judaic ideal of a merely political Messias or National Deliverer.

True Christian faith acknowledges Jesus as very God Incarnate,—the Second Person of the Eternal Trinity in the flesh. While the assertion by Jesus of His Messiahship and Divine Sonship was more appropriately and winningly corroborated by His miraculous healing of human infirmities, there were not wanting the predicted Messianic signs in the heavens and on the earth in conjunction with the appearance of Jesus among the Jews. And besides His innumerable and stupendous miracles throughout His public life, Jesus, in the hour even of His apparent defeat, gave to them and to the world appropriate miraculous signs in the heavens and on the earth, when, during His redeeming sufferings on the Cross, He put a veil upon the midday sun; threw open the tombs of the dead; rent the veil of the Temple, and shook all inanimate nature in a universal throb of sympathy for its dying Master.

The Christian Religion is divine,—being derived from no mere

man nor body of men, but founded objectively on the divine fact of the incarnation of God, and subjectively on our acceptance of this truth by the light of the gift of faith—the light of Christ. "This is the work of God, pleasing to the Father, that you believe in His only begotten Son, whom He hath sent into the world."

Without this faith we cannot be religiously enlightened, nor morally cleansed, nor spiritually saved. The self-styled Christians among the warring sects who refuse to acknowledge Jesus as very God stands convicted by His life, words and works either of religious ignorance or of hypocrisy. They know that they must hold that Jesus was the wisest and the best of men, and so they style Him; yet when we take Jesus at His word, as the highest intelligence and sincerest virtue of mankind have taken Him, we must adore Him as God Incarnate, or else,—if He were not God, we must maintain that He has by His very virtues and His miracles succeeded, and been allowed by God to succeed, in robbing the Eternal of His incommunicable glory; has made mankind everlasting and hopeless idolaters, and has branded Himself as either the greatest fool or the worst criminal in all the ages of time and in all the endless tides of eternity. What unspeakable ignorance or dastardly hypocrisy, therefore, it is, for men to refuse to Jesus His self-asserted and proven Deity and then come simpering and drivelling:—"He was a wise and good man!" No mere man, however wise and good, could satisfy the infinite Justice of God for human sin. No mere man, however wise and good, could satisfy and allay, as Jesus did, the forty centuries of human longing for the Redeemer. No mere man, however wise and good, could so sway the moral world, as Jesus did, and transform the human race from universal paganism to Christianity.

The mystery of the God-man, whose coming and whose divine works the prophets foretold, is believed by us not by virtue of

any signs, or miracles that we may have witnessed, but by virtue of the gift of divine faith bestowed in baptism on the children of the Church of God. Miracles were necessary at the epoch in which Jesus and His Church appeared. For when a primitive Revelation is about to be perfected by the divine reality which it had long prefigured, and when the religious and moral life of the world had reached the lowest depth of error and degeneracy, so that, either the restoration or the utter extinction of human society was the issue involved; then, if the world was to be saved, the religious teacher claiming the world's hearing and allegiance must show forth the divine argument of miracles as evidence of the divinity of His mission.

And such was the condition and such the requirement in the Hebrew and Gentile world when Jesus appeared and when He commissioned His Church. But since then, while miracles have never ceased in the Church, it is not on them that our Christian faith depends, for our faith is the gift of God to the members of the one, holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Infallible Church of Christ; we see that the Church is divine and we recognize the voice of the Son of God speaking to us through her.

Let our love for Jesus correspond with our faith in Him. The infinite perfection of His God-head and the transcendent perfections of His humanity, together with His immeasurable love for us manifested in the adorable mystery of His very Being and proclaimed from His birth in Bethlehem to His death for us on the Cross, are His claims to our supreme affection. Let us love Him with a tender, personal love established on the cheerful observance of His law and nurtured by the frequent partaking of His Sacramental Grace. Let us glory and delight in Him; and long for the endless ages of life in the embrace of Him who is at once our God and our brother,—merciful and mighty to save.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES

"So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."—Matt., xviii, 35.

The virtue of forgiveness consists in rejecting from our hearts every sentiment of hatred for our fellowmen and every desire of revenge, and in treating an enemy as our brother in Christ, as one who, equally with ourselves, is the object of God's care; made to His image and likeness; redeemed by the death of the Son of God, and called to eternal beatitude.

Jesus applies the parable in this day's Gospel to us sinners who are gathered by His mercy into His Kingdom or fellowship on earth, and He emphasizes the enormity of our indebtedness to God by our sins; the insignificance of our brother's indebtedness to us, and the ingratitude and heartlessness of those who, after being pardoned by God the immeasurable guilt of their mortal sins, refuse to forgive men their offences. By our mortal sins we have offended an Infinite Being and we could never make atonement; but, for the sake of the sufferings, the tears and the death of His Incarnate Son for us, the Father pardons us whenever we come to Him contritely for forgiveness. Hence our plain duty to forgive the offences of our brother towards us, and hence the special baseness and malignity manifested by the unforgiving heart.

In this matter we must ever be on our guard. For by no means the least of our temptations arise from the injuries we receive from our fellowmen; and if on such trying occasions we dare to close our hearts to the teachings of Christ and the inspirations of His grace, we shall be carried away as the toy of our

wicked impulses,—as the victims of satan's worst suggestions, and as the dupes of the lying maxims of the world. It is when we are under a sense of the wrong and injury done us that the world, voicing our evil inclinations and the suggestions of the devil, as also its own moral cowardice, asserts that it is the right of every man to avenge his wrongs; that no offence offered to us should go unpunished, and that to forgive an injury evinces a lack of manly spirit. On the contrary, to avenge our wrongs is the right of God alone and this right He exercises either directly or through the constituted authorities in society, of which He is the Author. But to all men, in every capacity, He has forbidden revenge,—"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord . . . There is one that humbleth and exalteth—God who seeth all." God forbids to the private individual every desire of revenge and every act of retaliation; and even to the lawful guardians of society He forbids every revengeful intent; and hence whoever attempts to avenge his wrongs usurps the right of God; attacks the good order of society, and sins against divine Justice and Christian Charity. It is false to assert that no offence should go unpunished. While public outrages offered to God should be promptly corrected by public authority,—which in this respect is too lax in our day,—yet any private individual may, for the love of God and his neighbor, condone an injury offered to himself, and thus exert a noble forbearance in imitation of the Almighty, who tolerates the incorrigibly wicked throughout their whole lives. It is false, again, to assert that to forgive an offence evinces a lack of manly spirit. To forgive a brother and forget his offence is the fruit of the highest moral courage and self-conquest, and evinces a greatness of soul which even the world secretly admires, though it is too cowardly to imitate it.

When, therefore, we are made to endure insult and injury from men we should remember that they are but secondary

agents of God, who permits them; and we should direct our attention, not to them, but to the Almighty, by whose providential disposition we are thus afflicted, and for the most beneficent purposes. We should imitate the piety of Job and the generosity of Joseph. When Job's enemies despoiled him of his possessions he acknowledged God as the principal cause of his losses and injuries, and he said: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." And Joseph of Egypt acknowledged and blessed the kindly providential hand of God in all that he suffered from his brethren, and he pardoned and enriched them in Egypt.

In the long run, or in the final sum of our lives, no man is really injured but by himself. For though we may experience here some external and transient injury from men, we are, ourselves, our worst interior and permanent enemies when we wickedly contaminate our souls by our malevolence and our desire of revenge, and consequently incur the guilt of mortal sin and the penalty of eternal damnation.

We should be able promptly and cheerfully to forgive and forget all injuries, were we duly impressed with the boundless charity of Jesus, our Merciful Redeemer, who, amid the torments of His crucifixion, prayed for us all, and in His dying cry invoked the Father's pardon upon His enemies: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL ALLEGIANCE

"Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."—Matt., xxii, 21.

The Pharisees and the Herodians, the strictest and the loosest of the Hebrew Sects, and implacable enemies of Jesus, combined to compass His ruin by betraying Him into giving a decision on the dangerous question of the tribute.

The payment of the tribute to Rome had long been a settled custom, and the fact that the later Jewish zealots secretly opposed it did not alter nor reopen the case; but the enemies of Jesus laid their snare so that whatever answer He might give to their question they could lay hold of it to His undoing. If He answered in favor of paying the tribute, the Pharisees would urge His words with the people as an attack on their rights; if He answered against the tribute, the Herodians, joined even by the Pharisees, would accuse Him of fomenting rebellion against the Roman State.

Jesus, knowing their thoughts and seeing the snare, ignored the dead issue of Hebrew politics and gave the luminous answer which was thenceforth to guide the conscience of Christians and determine the conduct of His Church in all ages amid the civil governments of the world. And first, to convict His enemies out of their own mouth of hypocrisy and iniquity, He required them to show Him the coin of the tribute; and they showed Him, not the Hebrew drachma sacred to the Temple, but the Roman denarius, or penny. Then He made them openly avow whose were the image and inscription on the pagan coin; and they said: "Cæsar's." Then He said: "Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."

By this answer Christ declared the spiritual and the civil authorities to be henceforth and forever distinct and separate; and He enjoined obedience to both when their authority is exercised within their proper sphere. The lawful civil authority justly requires our allegiance and obedience only in things temporal and when its laws are not contrary to the truth and law of God. The spiritual authority, invested by Christ in His Church, requires of her children obedience only in things spiritual—in matters of Christian faith, morals and discipline. And this distinction of the two authorities is conformed to the twofold condition of man,—to his temporal interests here and his eternal destinies hereafter. For, man is at once a member of organized society,—a citizen under the civil government and a subject of Heaven; and wherever this distinction is acknowledged civil and religious freedom are guaranteed.

Pagan Rome had confounded the two authorities and, in the name of an idolatrous state, trampled on the rights of human conscience; but the Christians of every condition throughout the Empire, while dying for their religious allegiance to the truth and law of God, asserted their civil allegiance to the just laws of the state. "We render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, but to God the things that are God's," that is, in all temporal matters of civil right we obey and honor you, but to your impious demand on us of idolatry we answer that "we must obey God rather than man."

The Jewish Sects pursued the early Christians by the same methods by which they attacked the Saviour. They alarmed the Roman Emperors with the suspicion of Christian disloyalty and instigated the most bloody of the persecutions. And at the same time, while the Christian martyrs, true to God and to civil duty, were dying by thousands, the Jews plotted the overthrow of the

Roman power and brought upon themselves the destruction of Jerusalem and the extinction of the Hebrew nation.

Modern Protestant Sects, waiving for the occasion their mutual conflicts, periodically resort to the same mode of attack on the Catholic Church. Jealous of her progress in this country, they seek to arouse the suspicion of the government or of the populace against Catholics as incapable of being at the same time loyal to this country and to the Pope, whom they, with sinister intention, style a "Foreign Potentate"; an appellation meant to mislead, as the Pope is not a civil potentate for us, but the spiritual father of Christians. But the two authorities must be confounded by our maligners before they can attack us with any show of success; and this in spite of the well-known fact of Catholic loyalty everywhere. It is worthy of note that our hypocritical slanderers are, themselves, mostly to be found in the ranks of the secret and turbulent societies which are plotting the overthrow of the civil order and authority in this country; and in this very respect they regard the Catholic Church as their most formidable opponent.

The Catholic Church teaches that God is the Author of human society; that the first necessity of society is the choice and appointment by the community of some men to be a center of civil rule, no matter what form of government the community may adopt; that the chief exercise and scope of the civil power are in legislating for the common good, and ruling in purely temporal matters; that the civil legislative power is founded on the natural and eternal law as it is in the mind of the Divine Author of human society; that it is therefore a participation of the authority of God, and must be obeyed in all temporal matters not contrary to the truth and laws of God, and therefore "he who revolts or plots against the lawful civil power resists the ordinance of God and purchases to himself eternal damnation" (Rom. xiii, 2).